



A. BROWN

*George Washington University  
Library of the History of Medicine*

# LETTERS OF DR. JOHN BROWN

With Letters from  
Ruskin, Thackeray, and Others

EDITED BY HIS SON

AND

D. W. FORREST, D.D.

WITH BIOGRAPHICAL INTRODUCTIONS

BY

ELIZABETH T. M'LAREN



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I DEDICATE THESE LETTERS TO MY  
CHILDREN, AND HOPE, AS THEY  
READ THEM, THEY WILL COME TO  
LOVE THEIR GRANDFATHER, WHOM  
IT IS THEIR MISFORTUNE NOT TO  
HAVE KNOWN IN LIFE.

J. B.



TO DR. JOHN BROWN

Beyond the north wind lay the land of old,  
Where men dwelt blithe and blameless, clothed and fed  
With joy's bright raiment, and with love's sweet bread,—  
The whitest flock of earth's maternal fold.  
None there might wear about his brows enrolled  
A light of lovelier fame than rings your head,  
Whose lovesome love of children and the dead  
All men give thanks for : I far off behold  
A dear dead hand that links us, and a light  
The blithest and benignest of the night,  
The night of death's sweet sleep, wherein may be  
A star to show your spirit in present sight  
Some happier island in the Elysian sea  
Where Rab may lick the hand of Marjorie.

A. C. SWINBURNE.

## PREFACE

THE following letters form a sketch of my father's life from his own pen, and I hope that nothing in them will give pain to his personal friends, but rather pleasure. To the readers of his books, whom I venture also to call his friends, they will, I think, give a more intimate knowledge of him than can be gathered from his writings. It must be remembered that the contents of this volume are in the truest sense letters. The reader, therefore, should bear in mind that the criticisms in them are in many cases not carefully weighed opinions, but are considerably influenced by the feelings of the moment and the character of the person to whom the letter is addressed.

I have thought it best to give the letters from Dr. Brown by themselves; in fact, to make them, as it were, an Auto-biography. It will be seen that there are very few of the letters addressed to him to which we have his answers. Where this is the case the reference is given.

The letters addressed to Dr. Brown are selected partly on account of their literary interest and partly as showing the strong affection felt towards him by writers differing so widely from each other in circumstances and in character.

The Rev. Dr. Forrest has rendered me valuable help in the editing of the letters; and I am much indebted to Miss M'Laren for having written the biographical introductions. I have also to thank Professor Crum Brown, Mr. J. Irvine Smith, Professor Hume Brown, the Rev. Dr. Alexander M'Laren, and Dr. J. Sutherland Black for advice and assistance. Through the kindness of Lady Ritchie and

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Messrs. Smith, Elder and Co., I have been able to make use of the letters of Thackeray to my father, and for a similar favour in the case of the Ruskin letters I am indebted to Mr. Alexander Wedderburn. To Mr. Swinburne for his kind permission to print his Sonnet, and to all who have sent me for publication letters of my father, or have allowed me to publish letters written to him, I return my sincere thanks.

JOHN BROWN.

EDINBURGH, *October* 1907.

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## INTRODUCTION

It has been often and truly said of John Brown that "he came of a good stock," or in equally old-fashioned phraseology, that "he had a godly ancestry." In his character the influence of heredity was most clearly marked. But while he believed as firmly as did his forefathers in "the things which are not seen," "the things which *are* seen," the here and now, were more full of interest to him than to them. He inherited a reverence for "things true, honest, and just," but he did not stop there. "Things lovely," the beauty of nature, the thrill of music, the wonder of art, filled him with delight; and his relish for all that was natural, pathetic, or queer in man, woman, child, or animal made him an endlessly interested observer, sometimes joy, sometimes sorrow possessing his spirit. His intellectual powers were great, his sense of humour keen, charming, but deepest of all was his sweetness of nature, and this accounts, in larger measure than all his other gifts, for his being, what pre-eminently he was, a man greatly beloved.

In the remarkable tribute to his father's memory which he has entitled "Letter to John Cairns, D.D.,"<sup>1</sup> he gives not only a vivid portrait of his father's mind and person, but by a few masterly strokes he sketches the characters of his grandfather and great-grandfather. They all bore the same name John Brown. His great-grandfather, author of the *Self-Interpreting Bible*, he calls "Our King, the Founder of our dynasty." A shepherd-boy on the braes of Abernethy, whose father and mother died before he was eleven, he taught himself Greek and much else. One evening, asking a companion to take charge of his sheep, he set out on a midnight journey to St. Andrews, twenty-four miles

<sup>1</sup> This somewhat awkward title originated in this way. When Dr. Cairns undertook to write the Life of the elder Dr. Brown, Dr. John Brown promised to supply personal and family details. Broken health and professional work prevented the fulfilment of his promise, and the memoir was published without his contribution. It appeared in the Second Series of *Horæ Subsecivæ* in 1860.



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distant. His purpose was to buy a Greek New Testament. The bookseller to whose shop he went the next morning was inclined to smile at his request, but a Professor coming in at the time, asked the lad some questions, and finally told him that if he could read a passage from the Testament he should have the book for nothing. He did so, and this Testament is now in the possession of his great-great-grandson. He had many difficulties to overcome before he became a thoroughly educated man, but he did overcome them all, so completely that he brought upon himself a final one. A certificate of church membership was withheld from him by the court of the congregation on "the allegation or suspicion that he had acquired his learning through a compact with the devil." His keen sense of humour would have enabled him to relish his great-grandson's remark on the subject—"That astute personage would not have employed him on the Greek Testament."

He became a celebrated preacher, theologian, author, and to this day the name of John Brown of Haddington is representative of all that is saintliest and shrewdest in Scottish character.

His son, John Brown of Whitburn, is spoken of in the Letter to Dr. Cairns as "fuller of love to all sentient creatures than any other human being I ever knew," and a quaint story is told of his kissing first his grandson and then his grandson's rabbits!

A well-known Edinburgh citizen, when a very little boy, was sent for a few weeks to the manse at Whitburn to recover strength after an illness. One morning, when in charge of "the boy who looked after the minister's pony," he was tempted to buy a little dog, and expended on the purchase all the money in his possession. On his return he gave a not entirely truthful account of the transaction: there was a discrepancy between his story and that of "the boy." No question was asked or suspicion hinted at, but the next morning, as Mr. Brown paced up and down the garden, he called to him to come, and gently stroking his head, said, "Robbie, ye'll be a guid boy and ye'll grow up a guid man, an ye'll *never* tell ony lees." A lesson in truthfulness was given on that summer day among the gooseberry bushes which was never forgotten.

Mr. Brown never left Whitburn; he was a minister there for fifty years, but his influence for good spread far and wide. In his time Linlithgowshire was not filled with smoky chimneys as it is now, but through its roads cattle were driven, on their way

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from north to south. He seems to have had the love his grandson possessed in a marked degree, of coming into touch with even casual passers-by; and, discovering that many of the drovers were very ignorant, he took a principal share in the formation of a "Gaelic Society," which for long was the chief vehicle of religious instruction in the Highlands.

Many still living can recall the appearance of his son (the father of our John Brown), "Dr. Brown of Broughton Place," as he was called in Edinburgh, where every one knew and honoured him. His face once seen, with its "blending of beauty, dignity, and sweetness," could never be forgotten. His whole bearing was impressive, and marked him out, quite unconsciously, from ordinary men. He was born at Whitburn in 1784, and from earliest boyhood there were signs of his passionate love of books and study, and above all, of his devout, religious spirit. He seems never to have had any other thought about his life than that he wished to consecrate it to "the work of the ministry." Having completed his course of study at the Edinburgh University, and Secession Hall, at that time meeting in Selkirk, he was ordained in 1806, and began his ministry at Biggar, a small town in Lanarkshire. In 1807 he married Jane, daughter of William Nimmo, a surgeon of eminence in Glasgow. She lived only till 1816. He remained at Biggar until 1822, when he was called to Edinburgh, and there he lived and died. By his own desire it is recorded on his tombstone in the New Calton Burying-Ground, that he was "Fifty-two years a minister of the Gospel of Christ, sixteen years in Biggar, Lanarkshire, thirty-six years in this city, and twenty-four years one of the Professors of Theology to the United Presbyterian Church." As a Professor he was a pioneer in the accurate study of the Bible, which has now become so marked a characteristic of Scottish Theological training.

Our John Brown was born at the Secession Manse, Biggar, on the 22nd September 1810. He was the second child but eldest son of his parents, and there were a daughter and a son younger than he. For vivid impressions of his childhood the reader must be referred to the Letter to Dr. Cairns. The very atmosphere of his home is breathed into its pages. The darkening of the household by his mother's early death, his deep affection for his father, not unmingled with a touch of awe, the son's pride in the father's talents, his beautiful face and

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simple, dignified bearing, all are there, while glimpses are given of the quiet, but not narrow, life in the hill-surrounded little town.

To those who are unfamiliar with Scottish ecclesiastical history, to whom the names of Ebenezer and Ralph Erskine mean little, it may seem that to be born and brought up in a "Secession Manse"<sup>1</sup> tells of a lot far removed from intellectual culture, and perhaps indicating restricted views of religion. But to think this would be a mistake. The seeds of all that John Brown became in after-life were sown in his childhood's home. He had nothing to unlearn. His father's library, while abounding in Theology, included many standard works of general literature, and from very early days his son gave himself up to studying their contents. Wordsworth's Poems (new then) were hailed by him with delight, because when still a child he had learned to love "The sleep that is among the lonely hills," had leant his "ear in many a secret place," and had "felt a Presence there."

He was twelve years old when his father removed to Edinburgh. He had been to no school up to this time: his father had been his only teacher. But when enrolled as a pupil in the Edinburgh High School he had no difficulty in taking a high place among boys of his own age.

On leaving the High School he entered at once on his University course, and, apparently without hesitation as to his career, the profession of medicine was chosen. His education, to use the word in its technical sense, was begun, continued, and ended under his father's roof.

During his course at the University, but before taking his medical degree, he was "apprenticed" to the famous Professor Syme. The practice of apprenticing young students was at that time almost universal; it has now ceased entirely, at least in

<sup>1</sup> The "Secession Church" was a branch of the Presbyterian Church of Scotland. It arose in 1733 by the Secession of four ministers and the greater part of their congregations from the Church of Scotland. The Secession was a protest against the "moderate" or rationalistic Theology prevalent at the time. The movement was greatly aided by the opposition in many parts of Scotland to the tyrannical use of the new law of Church Patronage.

In 1847 the Secession Church united with the "Relief Synod," a similar and smaller body of Seceders, dating from 1761, to form the United Presbyterian Church, with more than five hundred congregations.

In 1900 the United Presbyterian Church (then numbering 595 congregations) united with the great majority of the Free Church of Scotland to form the United Free Church of Scotland.

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Scotland. Minto House Hospital, into which "Rab walked with that great and easy saunter of his," had been fitted up by Professor Syme as a Surgical Hospital, and it was in his capacity there as "clerk" that John Brown received "James the Howgate Carrier when he lifted down Ailie his wife" at its gate.

Minto House no longer exists. It was taken down when the handsome modern Chambers Street was built, but its name will not be forgotten by any reader of "Rab and his Friends."

John Brown never ceased to be grateful for the training he got under Professor Syme. In the Preface to the first edition of *Horæ Subsecivæ* there is the following passage:—

I have to apologise for bringing in "Rab and his Friends." I did so, remembering well the good I got then, as a man and as a doctor. It let me see down into the depths of our common nature, and feel the strong and gentle touch that we all need, and never forget, which makes the whole world kin; and it gave me an opportunity of introducing, in a way which he cannot dislike, for he knows it is true, my old master and friend, Professor Syme, whose indenture I am thankful I possess, and whose first wheels I delight in thinking my apprentice-fee purchased, thirty years ago. I remember as if it were yesterday, his giving me the first drive across the west shoulder of Corstorphine Hill. On starting, he said, "John, we'll do one thing at a time, and there will be no talk." I sat silent and rejoicing, and can remember the very complexion and clouds of that day and that matchless view: *Dunmyat* and *Benledi* resting couchant at the gate of the Highlands, with the blue Grampians, *immane pecus*, crowding down into the plain.

In 1831 John Brown went as assistant to a Scottish doctor who had a large practice in Chatham, and remained there two years. Returning to Edinburgh, he took his degree of M.D. in 1833, and immediately began to practise, but still lived in his father's house, 35 London Street. Some time during the year 1834 he made the acquaintance of Catherine Scott M'Kay, who afterwards became his wife. She is spoken of in the letters as "Kitty."

Till he went to Chatham, except for occasional visits to relatives in or near Biggar, he had never left home. The earliest extant letter is dated September 22nd, 1830,—his twentieth birthday. At that time the family consisted of his father, his maternal grandmother, Mrs. Nimmo—who since her daughter's death had taken charge of the household—his sisters Janet and Isabella, and his brother William. His sister Janet soon after married Mr. James Young. His uncle, William Nimmo, too, was for a short time a member of the household.

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stockings; I find their comfort and warmth when riding. You should not knit overmuch as it may hurt your wrist. I am still very comfortable and as busy as ever, but I do weary to get home. I have been thinking a good deal about you all since the Cholera came among you. I hope God who has fed us and led us, so long and so indulgently, will continue to do so and spare us *all* a little longer. I have not time to write a full letter to you and must now say something to Isabella.—Your loving Grandson, JOHN BROWN.

On the same sheet as the above is the following:—

### III. TO HIS SISTER ISABELLA

MY DEAR ISABELLA—Your letter might have been longer, but I was very well contented with what there was. I shall for want of news give you a full account of my outlays, my extravagance, and my wardrobe. I seem inherently thoughtless of money, and it gives me often uneasiness to see how very incorrigible I am in all these matters in spite of my determination to be *thrifty*, although I do not think I have spent one shilling on anything vicious or even foolish, I do think, and when you read the sequel *you* will also think, that I might have been much more careful.

#### *Expenses since I left Edinburgh*

On board the steamboat, for Soda water . . . . .	1/6
To the Steward . . . . .	2/6
Porter at Blackwall . . . . .	1/
Coach to Leadenhall Street . . . . .	3/
Breakfast . . . . .	1/
Ginger Beer . . . . .	6d.
Porter to the Company's Office . . . . .	6d.
Dinner (very dear and exorbitant) . . . . .	2/
Porter to Chatham Coach . . . . .	1/
Coach hire outside . . . . .	5/
Coachman . . . . .	1/
Razor . . . . .	2/6
Pens . . . . .	1/
Letters from William Nimmo, about . . . . .	5/
Do. from home, about . . . . .	7/
Clogs—like my father's . . . . .	10'6
A pair of boots (quite necessary) . . . . .	£1 : 8/
A pair of Coloured Trowsers . . . . .	£1 : 8/

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Spurs (quite necessary, but perhaps I might have got a cheaper and not so good a pair)	10/
Quarterly collection at Ebenezer Chapel	2/
Subscription to the Temperance Society	3/6
Leeches for a poor miserable child	3/
To a woman	2/
For a piece, <sup>1</sup> only now and then; we breakfast at $\frac{1}{2}$ past 7, nothing until 1, coffee without any bread at 5, and porridge at 8 or 9, so that sometimes I am rather hungry,— <i>in all</i>	3/
For Whately's <i>Logic</i> ; it is a good book, but in my circumstances I should not have bought it	12/
For reading Sir Walter's <i>Robert of Paris</i>	1/6
This is the only novel of any kind which I have read since I came.	
Gloves—here I am sure you will be angry; I had 2 good pairs with me, and have bought 1 pair	3/6
Another	1/6
Another	3/6
Another	3/

Of this I am quite ashamed. I seem to carry about  
with me an unaccountable carelessness of these  
things.

This is nearly all that I can recollect, and I give you it  
plainly and fairly; if you think I have been very wrong tell  
me so.

I have missed out washings altogether; about 14/6,  
perhaps a little more—I get them very well done. Not one  
of the stockings has a single hole! not one, all in excellent  
condition. I have still my 3 silk handkerchiefs; my coats  
are both rather shabby, one of course much more than the  
other. It is almost impossible to escape wearing them here.  
I have always to have a good coat on, even in the Surgery,  
and the making the medicine, spite of the apron, does not  
improve them. My trowsers are very much worn in the  
inside of the knees with the constant riding, they have been  
mended repeatedly. I have got a pair of long leggings,  
which if I had had the sense to have got at once, would have  
saved me much trouble and expense. They are not yet paid  
for, but I have just this day got them. I have no accounts  
running except that and a pair of boots soled a day or two  
ago, and I have called for the account, but it was not ready.

<sup>1</sup> A light lunch.

## Letters of Dr. John Brown [1831

How do you get on with the household? Are there still difficulties, perplexities, vexations, and accounts as of old? I hope you do not fret or vex yourself overmuch about these things. I do not think there are many girls who at your age would or could have managed as you have done. What have you been reading? Are you often up at Janet's,<sup>1</sup> and is she as happy as ever? And the wee little Jeannie can it speak yet? I expect you will teach it a speech to be delivered to me on my first appearance. Are my Aunt Aitken and all the rest well? John and James? Give my best regards or remember me kindly (or any other appropriate phrase) to Aunt Clarkson, Aunt Thomas, Aunt Patterson; Lockhart particularly, kind-hearted girl that she is; all the Blyths most particularly. Tell them that if it were at all within the bounds of decorum I would write them a "*Catholic*" Epistle. I had a letter to-day from William Nimmo; he is quite well—as affectionate and thoughtless as ever. I have been and still am a good deal troubled with something in my back, but I hope it will soon go away.

Kind love to Uncle Robert.

### IV. TO HIS FATHER

CHATHAM, October 26th, 1831.

MY DEAR FATHER—I was very glad when, on answering the door yesterday morning (for that is one of my many offices), I found the postman with a letter for *me* from *you*. Indeed ever since I put in my letter I have been grumbling for yours. This is very unreasonable, but I think is owing to the thorough and sudden separation from you all, and before I had time to get anything like an equivalent among my friends here. I am now much more at home and shall try to be as patient as possible. I have been constantly employed since I came here. I get up about  $\frac{1}{2}$  past 7, go downstairs and put the Laboratory in order. At eight we have prayers which the Doctor *reads* in the morning (I think they are Jay's), then breakfast with *beefsteaks*, etc. After that for an hour or so I post the books, transferring the medicines from the Daybook into the Ledger. By this time the Gig is at the door and in we get, driving to Brompton, which is about 2 miles off and consists almost entirely of the dockyard, the two Hospitals, and the Barracks, and their

<sup>1</sup> His sister Mrs. Young.

natural accompaniments Alehouses. Here there are a great number very ill of a low fever which some would call typhus, but which I do not think in any degree contagious. Then he comes home about  $\frac{1}{2}$  past 11 and writes a page or two of prescriptions and is off again, leaving me to make up the medicines. This keeps me generally busy until  $\frac{1}{2}$  past 1, when we have dinner, and you may tell grandmother a dinner every day as much like in every respect and as simple as Janet's, with this improvement, that there is plenty of home-brewed "Nutchbrown" ale. By the time that dinner is over there are 10 or a dozen of patients waiting. These have all to have their *mixture* or draught or powders, and they pay to *me*. As soon as they are away and the morning's medicine sent, the Doctor gives me another page, and this is sufficient for me till 5, when Coffee is announced. After that medicines have to be filled up and the *books* arranged. I have generally a little time to myself for reading the Newspapers before supper and writing out cases. Dr. Martin gets the *Times* and is a thorough-going reformer in Church and State.

Supper is ready at 9 and is as Scotch as can be, *porridge* and bread and cheese; in fact, the Doctor is a most incorrigible Annandale man, and has converted his lively English wife so completely that *her* ways peep out only now and then. They are very much attached to one another and live very happily with their three children, a boy and two girls. He is a very excellent man, I think, and very consistent. When out with him he converses very freely on medical subjects, and although not brilliant, he is a very sensible and clear-headed man, with great simplicity of thought and expression, and though sober there is an occasional gleam of drollery which like everything about him is perfectly unaffected. He is very modest and diffident except in his profession, in which he is perfectly at home, and as he is in many things self-taught his experience is very valuable. Altogether I could scarcely conceive a more profitable situation. The young man who was in the shop when I came left it a few days after that, and I have had all that to manage, but there is a new Apprentice coming soon, who in the course of a month or six weeks will be able, I hope, to relieve me considerably. I can then profit by the Doctor's Library, which is extensive and very well selected. His collection of the latest valuable medical works is very complete, and as he has read through all the books he is very well able to direct me, and although my great object is practice,



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I will find time for a little reading. I have seen very little of the country except when sent out in the Gig to see patients. It is, however, even yet most beautiful, the richness of everything that has *greenness* is quite inconceivable by one who has not seen it—the woods and coppices, the very grass are different—and I sometimes think when I see the wooden houses covered with the vine and loaded with grapes, with the neat picturesque porch, the great trees and scrupulously tidy windows and benches before the door, with a Kentish man with his pure white Smock frock, his half boots, odd hat, and long waggoner's whip, drinking his beer and chatting to the neat and pretty landlady, that surely I am in France or some different climate. I have been pretty well since I came, but as it is a very damp situation, and as the Doctor lives in the worst part of Chatham, I have had a slight cold. I am better to-day. I have been obliged by his orders to get a hare skin for my breast, and a pair of Clogs. I give out my clothes to a washerwoman, but do not yet know what it will cost me. Mrs. Martin has made me a nice white apron, *bib* and all, and she is every now and then looking in to see how I am and that all is comfortable. Yesterday she brought me a bowl of Chocolate, and this morning I have devoured several bunches of their own grapes. I have learned many very interesting and very pleasing particulars about Henry's<sup>1</sup> death—he seems to have been as much loved here as with us. They were very much gratified with the portrait. I hope you continue well, you say nothing about that in your letter. Tell grandmother, Isabella and William, and Uncle Robert that I will *try* and have a letter for each of them next week. They will be brought by Mr. George, the Doctor's Apprentice, who comes to Edinburgh for the Winter, but as I am so busy you must make some allowance for me. During the day I manage to be very happy because I am very much engaged, but when night comes and sleep I immediately return home and am low-spirited enough; but even this is wearing off, and although even yet I occasionally during the night when I waken put out my hand and do not find *you*,<sup>2</sup> I have reason to be very *grateful* that even there is this degree of *regret*. Write me soon and be very PARTICULAR. Mr. S— called for me very soon after my arrival; he recollects you completely, in fact your sermon at the Baptist Missionary

<sup>1</sup> Son of the Rev. Dr. Belgrave of Colinton. See Letter to Dr. Cairns, *Hours Subseciva*, 2nd Series, p. 36. A. and C. Black.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* p. 13.

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Meeting has given you quite a name here. He preached twice Sunday before last. He is a very good man, but getting garrulous and *dotted*,<sup>1</sup> consequently it is scarcely *preaching*, but a good-humoured, *soothing* collection of sentences at random strung and having no definite object; in fact, there is a great want of applicability and personality about them, and nothing whatever of explaining or interpreting Scripture. Notwithstanding all this the church is well attended; in fact, he has very great influence, I think too much, over the people. The service was new to me and interesting; the *singing* is the finest thing I have ever heard; it is general and at the same time harmonious—far better conducted than either St. George's or St. Stephen's band.<sup>2</sup>

I have had very little time for reading and can scarcely manage more than 18 or 20 verses of the Greek Testament and a bit of Butler every night. The Doctor has been very kind and has introduced me to a number of his friends, but I do not intend going out any at all. I was in the country about 9 miles lately and was delighted with the scenery. There is certainly something unapproachable in the "stately homes of England." The Doctor is making money very fast—his income is upwards of £1200 a year. I am busy making it for him too—bleeding and drawing teeth, going into the country, etc.; bleeding is 2/6, teeth 2/ each, a journey 5/ or 7/, etc. There are 25 Surgeons here and all well employed, in fact the people have as ravenous an appetite for and can as little do without medicine as without bacon or beer. You must again excuse this letter as it has been written in the back shop, each sentence alternating with a knock at the door, which must be answered. Kind love to ALL. Remember me to *our* next-door friends, and believe me your affectionate son,

JOHN BROWN.

### V. TO HIS BROTHER WILLIAM

CHATHAM, 26th October 1831.

DEAR WILLIAM—This will be given you by Mr. Edward George, the Doctor's apprentice. He is a good-natured young man, with no great depth either of thought or feeling, but as he has been very obliging to me, I would like him to come down to breakfast occasionally and go up with you to Hope's.<sup>3</sup> I do not mean, however, that you should make a

<sup>1</sup> Approaching dotage.

<sup>2</sup> Choir.

<sup>3</sup> Professor of Chemistry in the University of Edinburgh.

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companion of him, as I have known too little of him to recommend him for that. Indeed, my dear William, the fewer *companions* you have the better. Have one *friend*, one steady moral friend, and I think Alexander Brown is such an one. I have been *very* busy indeed, having had to do *all* the work of the shop and also act as assistant. The Dr. sends out on an average between £4 and £5 worth of medicine. His income is upwards of £1200, and I draw for ready money frequently 10 or 14 shillings a day. His practice is very simple and decided, and in some diseases remarkably and uniformly successful, and as he is very communicative and very unassuming I get a great deal of his *knowledge*. The new apprentice comes on Monday and then I shall have some relief—from answering the door, rubbing down the patients who come for the vapour bath, etc. I have had no time to examine the plants in the neighbourhood; indeed they are almost all dead. I notice the *Cichorium Intybus* in very great abundance by the roadsides. From anything I can see there is a wonderful exuberance of vegetation here.

I have not examined either the dockyard or the fortifications, both of which are full of interest. The castle is a fineonial-looking building. The Cathedral is near it and most but paltry. The river is very broad and smooth, and in a fine clear day looks quite foreign with its broad shallow barges with dark red heavy Lateen sails, hanging on the wind, and the old Dutch-looking wooden houses standing in the water, with their sharp gables and projecting storeys with neat lattice windows. Then there is the odd dress of the sailors, with bright yellow worsted spencers and large slouched hats; and the long strings of donkeys carrying neat little bags of white sand of the size and shape of Bologna sausages (these are brought from Brompton and are used for *sanding* the floors), winding through the narrow streets, with 2 or 3 boys in their pure white or yellow frocks, are very pretty. But amidst all this outside neatness and cleanliness the people are very inferior to our peasantry in intellect. They are more *perfect animals*, keep their bodies cleaner, think more about their eating and drinking and their little comforts than we do, but this is nearly all. There is also a want of that deep enduring affection among relations. I have never seen anything like it. If a daughter or son continues *long* ill (they are very attentive for a day or two) they get tired and almost wish him out of the way. About a week ago I went 9 miles to see a young lady who

had a brain fever; on going into the house and asking how she did—it was near 11 o'clock—I was told the nurse had said she was rather better. Her father had not *seen* her that morning and her mother was away on a visit, and she was left *entirely* to the care of 2 nurses. This is a specimen of the kind of *affection*. They are all very polite, but the death of a friend makes a very transient impression; in fact, it is not uncommon to go in, and being ushered into the dining-room, to find the *whole* family enjoying a comfortable dinner, with a nice pudding and some stewed apples, and on asking how their father is you hear that he died that morning!

And now, my dear William, though I am 400 miles away from you, my thoughts are often with you, and they are sometimes anxious and sad, at others cheering and satisfying. My dear William, be assured that there is no real happiness where there is the indulgence in *guilt*—that pure thoughts and upright actions as assuredly and as consequently cause real happiness as the sun light and heat. Keep this always before you; Know the God of your fathers. Although I do not think I am really religious—I fear I am not—I can see from experience that the way of transgression is *hard*. In everything you do think of its *strict morality*. When you go to Mr. Syme's<sup>1</sup> you will be exposed to great temptation, and if you do not *take high ground* instantly you will never be safe. Whenever you hear them talking impurely leave the room instantly, and give them very soon to know that you differ from them because *God* differs from them, and when asked why you would not do so and so, never be ashamed of saying God has forbidden it; the *Bible* says so and so. I think you should get up about 7, read over a little Chemistry, come down and not only attend but *attend to* worship, then instead of loitering and wasting your time, about nine o'clock get ready soon to go to Hope's. Take a notebook, but do not take anything but heads of Lectures; pay great attention to his lectures on Heat, try and get Leslie and read *some* of it—if possible all the part where he *describes apparatus*. He has a great talent in that way. Also try to come at Sir H. Davy's peculiar theory about the materiality of heat. I wish you to give all your attention to this, but as I find there is no more room I shall reserve my *letter* for you until next week. Meanwhile, good-bye, my dear William, and think of me now and then; and I earnestly request you to set about seriously changing your manner

<sup>1</sup> See *Horæ Subsecivæ*, 1st Series, p. 360.

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towards our good old grandmother. I believe you mean little ill, but that is of no consequence if she feels it as she does. I am sure it is very little for you to bear with her who has so often borne with the faults and ill-natured behaviour of us all.—Yours truly,

JOHN BROWN.

### VI. To THE SAME

CHATHAM, 27th Feby. 1832.

MY DEAR WILLIAM—I have been peculiarly pleased with my father's and Isabella's letters as giving me so much information of my grandfather's death. . . . I have read both letters over and over, and when I come to "where he was heard to sing in a gentle manner," etc., I cannot help it but I cry like a child. There is a completeness, a consistency in the whole event that is to me most beautiful, everything so peaceful, so full of kindness, so heavenly, so like himself. I cannot tell you how I could have wished to have seen him, even to bury him. The funeral must have been most interesting. I daresay you will never forget it. It was a fitting and worthy ending to his honoured life. . . .

I got your letter and read it, but why so short, so general; you have not time to get warm before you are done. Surely you might say a great deal more, and let your mind come a little closer, and be more hearty and confiding. In the four months that have passed there was enough to *fill* the letter. However I am very well pleased as it is. Tell Isabella that as to her I am content though far from satisfied; she has not yet attained to the pouring forth. Surely when we do get together again there will be no end of talking. I at least am prepared for a most resolute chatter. I dreamt the night before last that I had at length got home and had made my way into the dining-room at night, with the lamp on the table, when I was astonished at the coolness with which grandmother *looked up*, aye merely *looked up*, and said nothing. Then in comes my father, and after surveying the room as is his way, turning over and scrutinising everything, in his own quiet and silent manner, *he* turns round and says, "John, I wish you would come upstairs and put the books in some sort of order"! This I hope is no type of what is to take place in 2 months,—no cast-before shadow of the coming event. I have of late been more *troubled* with home thoughts than ever; they become quite inveterate, and are

coming over me with a sort of dwalm<sup>1</sup> on all occasions. The simple mention by Uncle Aitken in his letter, after telling me that you had been at Callands,<sup>2</sup> that "William has left us to-day and Andrew and Robie are accompanying him up the parish,"—the mere words *up the parish* went directly to my heart, and I was dismal for the next day. As the time shortens the desire seems to increase. I suppose my father has got *Saturday Evening*.<sup>3</sup> I in a fit of thoughtlessness have bought it and read it. It is all excellent, but I wish you particularly to read the chapter on the means of mercy; perhaps the plain statements of one non-Professional may strike you. We have at last had a case of Cholera. On Tuesday the Dr. came and told me there was a case of Cholera. Away we went, and I was very much struck at the first sight of the wretched patient; her visage was blue and ghastly, and her eyes turned up so as to present nothing but the senseless inexpressive white. It was a most distinct case in some respects,—the blue skin, the state of prostration and collapse, cold extremities, etc., all told that death was dealing with her. I was with her for 2 hours, and I saw her in the evening 4 times, and about  $\frac{1}{2}$  past 11 at . . . She died at one next morning. She was a poor, ignominious Irishwoman, not a drunkard but a dram-dr . . . You can have no idea of the consternation the solitary . . . has spread through all the towns: nothing else is talked of and nothing thought of by many. All the medical men saw her, along with military medical men, and they have been disputing and fighting over the body ever since. . . .

We have had no other case, although it is now a week since it occurred. This in addition to many other—to me satisfactory—reasons leads me to consider it non-contagious. I think you have managed things remarkably well. I feel quite proud when I see how much more wisely you have acted than almost any of the English Boards. The London one has become a vulgar laughing-stock. I am glad to see that you

<sup>1</sup> Sinking.

<sup>2</sup> Callands was the home of his uncle by marriage, Mr. Aitken, a place not far from Biggar, and associated with the days of early childhood. After the removal of the Brown family to Edinburgh visits to Callands were very frequent. The quiet days spent there were never forgotten, but cherished as sacred memories to life's end. In the Letter to Dr. Cairns "James Aitken of Callands" is mentioned as "a man before his class and his time, for long the only Whig and Seceder laird in Peeblesshire, and with whom my father shared the *Edinburgh Review* from its beginning."

<sup>3</sup> By Isaac Taylor; a book of much influence in its day.

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continue to study; give your whole soul now to it and you will not only have [no] agonising regrets of wasted time, but you will find everything easy, plain, and open. Write me soon and give me a particular account of your doings.—Your affectionate brother,

JOHN BROWN.

### VII. TO HIS SISTER ISABELLA

CHATHAM, *March 12th, 1832.*

MY DEAR ISABELLA—Twenty-four long, dreary days (and nights) and not a single letter, not even from the fail-me-never John Millar.<sup>1</sup> Really if you knew the unhappiness and the vexation it gives me when Mrs. Martin day after day asks me—"Well, what news from Home, Mr. Brown?" you would not grudge to send a letter at least fortnightly, and now that there is only *2 months* it will not fall very hard on each of Five to write once. Whether you care about hearing of me or not, most assuredly I care about hearing of you, and not merely being told that all is going on as usual,—that you are all well and that there is no new thing. *Every* thing cannot be going on as usual, and there must be *some* new thing; and even supposing that there be no change, surely there are enough of old thoughts to furnish one letter from a sister to her brother. I daresay you may think me silly from the way in which I run on and bother you with letters, but it is a silliness which I would far rather have than *silence*. I say this in earnest. I particularly refer to William's letters, which I hoped to have been more full, more thoughtful, and more brotherly than they have been. Not that I think there is *any* want of affection, if that were the case I would trouble myself very little about the matter; but it is a species of indolence, a want of putting forth into action what you are quite sure you possess, and which perhaps for that very reason are so careless of manifesting. You may think this is much ado about nothing, but when you come to be as far away from home as I am, and as much worried with labour, and having an opportunity of hearing only once a fortnight, you would find it not easy to keep out sad and even angry thoughts when that fortnight was extended to fully 3 weeks. Have you got the *box*? If you have I will thank you to send the

<sup>1</sup> Dux of Dr. Brown's class at the High School, referred to in Letter of date 26th Nov. [1851].

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letters and the jars away as soon as possible. I wish you to consult and tell me what I ought to do after leaving Chatham. I intend walking down to Canterbury and Maidstone and some other places, and if you would permit me I would *walk* home. I can easily do it in 16 days and at very little expense. I would wish very much to see some of London, but as I have spent so much money here I would not wish to spend more than I could possibly prevent. I wish very much my father had to come up to London in May. I wish so much to let my friends here see him and he them; but that I suppose is most unlikely. As to the everyday work one day tells the other's story verbatim,—the same work, work, work, but I am upon the whole very happy; everything is so quiet, snug, and comfortable here, the Dr. and Mrs. Martin kinder than ever, and the children *all* pets, but Elizabeth the beautiful, the clear-eyed, and the mischievous, being as yet in the ascendent. She is a perfect *Puck*. Often when I have a little time I get into the Library and have a fine set to with the whole 3 on my back, making all the noise and fun we can. You *must* see them. I think it not unlikely that, if Mr. Dods pleases, the Dr. will bring them all down. But I have altogether forgotten and have got out of the appropriate temper for giving one and all of you a sturdy rebuke for you—I leave each of you to fill up. Really it *is* too bad.

I long exceedingly, sometimes most painfully, to be home. Sometimes it comes upon me all at once. The sight of an advertisement in the Journal as “Skirling townhead to let” —“Linton market,” etc., sometimes makes me quite childish, and the exquisite mornings we have had here and the joyous spring all lead me far, far away. Now the only way to keep this off is for you to keep up a constant fire of letters, letters, letters. There is a large enough body of you to relieve one another. Of course there are 10,000 things omitted in this letter, but do you know I first intended to send you for your conduct a *carte blanche*?

VIII. TO THE SAME

CHATHAM, 27th March 1832. 1

MY DEAR ISABELLA—Your letter was most welcome, only it might have been a little longer seeing my father has not yet written. You make no mention of the long list of



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expenditure which I sent you. I am vexed at this because I conclude you have been displeased—notwithstanding which I now give you the conclusion, which I fear is more blameable than the other.

“*Mr. Hathaway, £1:1/.*” You, of course, ask who is Mr. Hathaway and how came I to give him £1:1/. Mr. H. is a very excellent Independent teacher in whom Dr. Martin has taken a very great interest. He is a first-rate classic and teaches (or rather taught) privately. Mr. George, our Apprentice, was sent to him by Dr. M., and one evening when the Dr. was talking about him I asked if he could teach Latin composition. The Dr. said he could and advised me to go to him as a preparation for the ensuing graduation. I, partly to please the Dr., partly to benefit myself, went and had a 2 hours’ lesson, which was to be given once a week, I in the interval having a long Latin theme to write. Being determined to be very generous and very gentlemanly, I paid him at once £1:1/. I have never had another lesson. He was shortly cast into prison for unavoidable debt, and wrote to me promising if *possible* to return me the money WHEN he was liberated from Maidstone Jail! Of course there is no hope of ever receiving it. In this matter I am certainly guilty of very great inconsideration and thoughtlessness.

“*Whately’s Logic, 12/.*” For this I give no excuse, as it is an excellent work, but I bought it without thinking.

“*Saturday Evening, 10/.*” This is less objectionable as it is a book of real worth, but a book which I was in no wise called upon to buy.

“*Bell’s Surgery, 6 Octavo volumes very well bound and in excellent condition for 15/.*” As this was a “Bargain,” and as it was a chance if ever I met in with so cheap and so good a copy, I think I was right in buying it.

Also *Cheselden’s Surgical Observations, 2/.*

For 2 prints, 3/.

A pair of leather braces, 4/.

Washing a dozen shirts, etc., 5/.

Soleing boots, 5/.

Soleing and welting them, 7/.

For letters and parcels, 6/ or 7/, including those which I have paid.

Paper and pens, 1/6.

Then comes the clothes’ account, and here I must preface that imprimis I have been harassed continually with my coats and waistcoats giving way at the seams; they appear to have

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been very ill sewed. Again, my first pair of black trowsers were all but *shabby* when I came here, and my other pair after a week's riding were rapidly following them. The coloured pair have worn out, but when I tell you that the Dr. has repeatedly worn fairly out a pair in a fortnight, you will not be surprised that they have often needed mending. Both black coats are now rather white at the elbows, so much so that after wearing them until Dr. and Mrs. Martin looked very queer at them, I got a surtout of dark green, which, however, I have been as careful of as possible. The best black coat has improved a good deal, and by dint of my endeavours with soap, etc., to renovate it, is now tolerable. I was also obliged to get a new waistcoat. The following is the bill and it is large:—

Repairing trowsers	. . . . .	6d.
Do. black do.	. . . . .	1/6
An extra superfine Invisible Green surtout		£3 : 13/6
A black cassimere waistcoat	. . . . .	14/
Repairing black coat	. . . . .	1/
Do. waistcoat and trowsers	. . . . .	2/6
A pair of milled drab overalls	. . . . .	15/
Strapping cassimere trowsers	. . . . .	5/
		<hr/>
		£5 : 13/
		<hr/>

I am afraid you are *very* angry at this, as also will be my father and grandmother. I wish I had got the *leggings* sooner and that would have saved much. I am as usual well, and, with here and there a *gloomy* day, as happy, perhaps more so than I could expect. We have had one more case of Cholera. A very fine healthy fisherman of robust habit and strictly sober was taken at half-past one in the morning of Friday and died at eleven the same day. I could scarcely conceive a more marked case. Remember me as usual to all.  
—I am ever yours, JOHN BROWN.

FROM HIS FATHER

EDINBURGH, 19 PILRIG STREET, 23d April 1832.

MY VERY DEAR SON—For such you are, though my being so long in replying to your letters may tempt you to think otherwise. I have often blamed myself for not sooner writing you, but you know my engagements are numerous, and when

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I have a few spare moments, I am often quite indisposed to everything that requires even a slight mental exertion. Your letters have given me much satisfaction. I trust that the months spent away from home will turn out in their results to be some of the most important months of your life. It affords us all the greatest pleasure to think we are likely by the goodness of providence soon to see again in the midst of us one whom we all love. As to the mode of your return I leave it in a good measure with yourself. Your Grandmother is afraid that should you fatigue yourself by walking, Cholera, which is prowling about many parts of the country, might lay hold on her favourite Grandson and devour him, and wishes you after having spent a few days in London to come down direct by the Smack or the steamboat. I wish you to avoid all danger, and all *needless* expense. In other things please yourself. Let me know *quam primum* what sum will be necessary for travelling expenses, and it will be immediately remitted. I will send by Mr. Dods a letter or two of introduction to friends in London.

We are at present in the midst of the hurry and bustle of the Synod. To-day is a day of intermission. We have a great deal of business before us, but nothing of very peculiar interest. Mr. John Crum was married a fortnight ago to a Miss Brown from near Beith. The connection seems very agreeable to all parties concerned, and promises to be a happy one. What influence this marriage may have on another in that family time will prove.<sup>1</sup> I hope it will be favourable. When in London get one of Mr. Tassie's Medallions of me, not framed, but fixed on an agate like the one Isabella got, and pay for it.

I was greatly gratified with Mr. Young's account of his visit to Chatham. He seems exceedingly pleased with Dr. Martin and his Family. I trust we soon will have an opportunity of getting better acquainted with them, as they intend, I understand, by and by to visit Edinburgh. I do not know if any of your correspondents have told you that when you return it will not likely be to Pilrig Street, or if to Pilrig Street it will only be as a wayfaring man to tarry for a night. We remove to Claremont Crescent in a few weeks. I wish you may be home to help me in removing the library. The house I have taken is that next to Mr. Laurie's. Mr. Stone's

<sup>1</sup> The Rev. Dr. Brown was engaged to Mr. John Crum's sister, only daughter of Alexander Crum of Thornliebank, near Glasgow. His marriage to her took place in 1835.

is on the other side. It is a very comfortable house, and the view is magnificent. What you say about the state of your mind does not surprise me, and I trust that your views of Christian truth will ere long exert a more distinctly felt influence both in tranquillising and purifying the mind and heart. It was a good remark of a person in circumstances somewhat similar to yours, "I see there is nothing for me but my Bible and my knees." A Mr. Holdsworth, paymaster to the 82<sup>nd</sup> Regt., just come to Edinburgh, has applied for admission to the fellowship of our church. He speaks of Mr. Slatterie with much regard, and says he was for some time a member of his church, or at any rate communicated with him. Will you mention this circumstance to Mr. S. and ask his opinion of Mr. Holdsworth. Mr. H. had been in connection with a congregation under the care of a Missionary from the London Missionary Society at the Mauritius, or Isle of France. William is getting on, I trust, upon the whole very well. . . . Mr. Dods speaks of leaving about the end of this week or beginning of next. As soon as you fix your plan of returning let me know. I saw Dr. Belfrage lately. He thinks William should without delay be apprenticed to Mr. Syme. I think it better to let that stand, at any rate till you return. The Dr. is upon the whole in very good health. The Synod meeting coming so near to the administration of the Lord's Supper has occasioned me some inconvenience. I expect Dr. Dick for my assistant on the 1st Sabbath of May. We have greatly added to the Table Seats, so that there will not likely be more than 4 Table services. Dr. Belfrage of Falkirk preached last night the annual sermon for the Scottish Missionary Society, and the Public Meeting is to-day. Mr. Syme has got his class-room furnished, but I have not yet seen it. I am obliged to hurry away to the Missionary Meeting.—With kindest regards, and hoping soon to hear from you, I am, my dear John, your affect. Father,

JOHN BROWN.

## IX. TO HIS FATHER

*CHATHAM, 27th April 1832.*

MY VERY DEAR FATHER—I have just received your letter, and as there is no time to lose I shall forthwith answer it, although it must be very hurriedly. I had hoped that I should have been able to have brought myself home, but with

## Letters of Dr. John Brown [1832

my characteristic carelessness I have put this quite out of my power, and I must again apply to one who has never yet refused me. I have remaining £3:11/. I gave £1:7/ for a hat, my old one being quite shabby. I have now only the tailor's bill to pay, which is £5:13/, so that I would require two guineas to make it up. Then as to my expense in London, that I do not think can be much. You do not say where you wish me to live, whether in lodgings or not. I rather think the latter would be upon the whole the cheaper, and to me the more agreeable way. Mr. Young told me of a very decent place near St. Paul's in which he paid eighteen-pence a night for his lodging. I do not wish to remain above 3 or 4 days, and I only intend seeing all the pictures I can in the different Exhibitions and Galleries, and then walk and look about me. If I go down to Penrith by the coach, I suppose the fare is £3:3/ all the way, so that to Penrith it will probably be two-thirds of that, with the usual allowances. From Penrith I think I could easily manage to walk home at the rate of 4/ a day, or I daresay less, and the whole could be managed in 4 days, and it would be a very great gratification. Perhaps my *contract* may appear to you too low, but I am persuaded I could manage it; but if you have any immediate need of me, or any unwillingness that I should take this way, I shall of course at once give it up.

I am very desirous to see Canterbury and Dover, and my present plan is to go down to Canterbury by one of the night coaches (6/ outside) so as to be there at 4 in the morning and in plenty of time to walk to Dover, distance 16 miles. After seeing it I shall walk to Ramsgate and Margate, and take the coach from there to Canterbury, where I will remain all night, and after spending the next day in seeing the Cathedral, etc., return *home* to Chatham in the evening, but on this also I await your decision. If I were to return by the smack directly without being more than a day in London, £5 would suffice, *inclusive* of the £2:2/ for the Tailor's bill. I think I mentioned in my last that if I remained in London and called on any of your friends, I would require a new pair of trowsers. They will cost £1:7/.

I need not say that as the time draws near I long to be in the midst of you. I have been very happy here, and I trust not altogether unimproved in my profession, and if I had had time I might have had many good friends. As it is, they have been very kind, Mr. S.'s family and Mr. Acworth's

## 1832] Letters of Dr. John Brown

especially. Dr. Martin is now fixed on coming to Scotland in June. This has given me great pleasure, as I shall then have an opportunity of making you all mutually known. He will bring down his whole household, and intends remaining about a month. I look forward with fear and hope to the ensuing summer. I wish you would write me as soon as is possible and give me my final destination.—With very kindest regards to yourself, I am yr. most affecte. son,

JOHN BROWN.

### X. TO HIS BROTHER WILLIAM

CHATHAM, June 25th, 1832.

MY DEAR WILLIAM—When shall I hear from any of you? When? I have not written partly because I have got *sulky*, and partly because I have had more than usual anxiety and work. Mr. Dods and I are getting on very well, and keeping as yet all the patients the Dr. left, and getting new ones. I have had more, of course, to perplex and harass me, but at the same time my intercourse with a higher and more educated class has given me more pleasure. I took off a young man's arm on the morning the Dr. sailed. I found the operation ridiculously easy, and the whole of the stump, with the exception of the corner where the ligatures hung out, healed *primâ intentione*. Mr. Dods and I have used the actual Cautery three times, and I hope with success. The poor woman whose breast I removed is quite well. We have Cholera raging on board one of the Convict Ships here. These have (they say) 90 cases and about 30 deaths. Its appearance among them was entirely spontaneous, and is not to be wondered at. Above 900 sleep in one ship with their hammocks huddled together between decks; they have butcher meat only twice a week and bad bread, they work twelve hours at hard labour, and are all broken down by dissipation. Mr. Dods and I had one case in the town last night; he died this forenoon, and I would not at all be surprised at our having a very severe visitation of it. Our poor patient was a worthless, dissipated man, and had been under the complaint for 3 days and a half, and of course our treatment was very inefficient. I will thank you in your letter to give me the latest information about the *transfusion* plan, specifying the quantities of salt, etc., and whether or not it promises much. I shall certainly try it,

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and perhaps also the actual Caution along the spine, after a certain time; that is when the *collapse* has fairly set in. I have little faith in anything, and I am sure that almost all the cases have been *over-treated* in this stage.

July 10th.

It is rather singular that the foregoing subject has prevented me until now from finishing my letter. We have had a most alarming visitation from Cholera. In our own practice we have had upwards of 30 cases and 10 deaths, besides many more through the towns. The poor convicts are still dying, and several of the sergeants have dropped down at drill and died in a few hours. The people here have been very much alarmed, but they have all showed a fulness of confidence in us that is very pleasing. In fact, we two are the great Cholera doctors,<sup>1</sup> and ever and anon we are called in as most learned physicians.

We have had for a week past most harassing work, and although still able to hold on, the continual night work and the constant state of suspense we are kept in about the Dr.'s own particular patients has brought both of us down considerably. How I shall luxuriate with you when I return! You cannot conceive how precious and how refreshing to me, in the midst of all this, is the prospect of soon being again one of you. It has been of great use in keeping me up, although we are quite able for our work, and willing to hold on for a week or two longer. I think the Dr. will be up soon, and then off I go to London, and bestriding the first flash of lightning I meet, away, away. I have told you nothing of London and I mean to tell you nothing until I see you. Suffice it that my usual thoughtlessness "*de pecuniâ*" followed me thither, and one way or other cost me 5 or 6 pounds. Though I say this jokingly, my dear William, I would have you to remember that I consider such folly, though perfectly removed from vice or open sin, is in itself sinful. I wish I could feel this a great deal more than I do; my money is like a continual dropping, it is always

<sup>1</sup> Many years after Charles Dickens, at a private dinner-party in Edinburgh, told of the deep impression made on his mind by the conduct of a young Scottish doctor at Chatham during the cholera epidemic. He described his remaining with a poor woman whom all had deserted, ministering to her to the end, and then, overcome with fatigue, falling asleep, and being still asleep when in the morning the house was entered. One of the party exclaimed, "That is Dr. John Brown!" Dr. Brown himself was present.

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gliding away, *never* viciously but too often very thoughtlessly. I hope you will take warning by me and never spend any money except when really needful.

I think I shall return by Smack, as it is cheaper, but of this you shall have timeous notice. Tell John Millar my predicament, and that I shall write him speedily. Tell the same to Mr. Young and give him my most grateful regards. Remember me most affectionately to my beloved Father, Grandmother, Janet, Isabella, Uncle Robert, and yourself. "*Quis desiderio sit pudor tam cari*"? I am pretty well, although a good deal worn out. I hope you are all *quite* well, Grandmother especially.—Yours ever, my beloved brother,  
JOHN BROWN.

### XI. TO HIS SISTER ISABELLA

1834.

MY BELOVED ISABELLA—I came home about an hour ago in one of those silent unkind moods in which I fear I too often am. One of those desperate quarrels with poor old Grandmother about nothing, in which much of our good temper has been many a time wasted, and in which I was so much to blame as to wish I could ask her pardon, but had been too proud, too cruel to do it; one of these petty squabbles had sent me away gloomy, and I came home no better, conscious *so far* that I was wrong, but not having the courage to put all right. I sat down to write to you, and the very idea that you WERE at Callands, and in all probability blithe and merry, came and stole away my sullenness ere I was aware. Marvellous transformation of all things! Old Grandmother is looked upon more in pity than in anger, and a few cheerful words sets all right again, and before I know where I am, there lies before me the mass of ridiculous hawering which in my joy I had dashed out. And now instead of feeling VERY sad that there were so many away from home who *might* never come back, I thought of you with your *simple, single* mind wandering at will among Nature's simple things and simple folk. I have no doubt that you have been as happy as the day was long, and have recovered somewhat of the old elastic mirthfulness and joy of heart which many constant home vexations had almost broken. I have been thinking a great deal about you and about all of us, and although I have no hope that of myself I can keep the often resolved resolution to be uniformly kind to you, yet I hope, by the help of God, that Willie and I



## Letters of Dr. John Brown [1834

may yet do *justice* to our sister. Though it is true that I love you as I think I love but very few, I have often felt most malignant against you when in your straightforward way you have caught me. Now, instead of saying a great deal of all this, which is very fine, let us without any more ado try what we can do for one another. Willie and you and I must soon be left alone in the world, and surely it is wise that we should do all we can to make *ourselves* happy and good. My father, if he marries, as I hope he will, MUST, OUGHT to transfer much of his heart elsewhere. Janet HAS. Grandmother is fast decaying, and will soon leave us. We have all, I am sure, a notion that we are very excellent sort of people. Now think seriously what it is that has so long hindered us from being to each other what we ought to be, and the whole secret lies in a little—a very little self-denial. For my part, I mean to begin immediately, with the hope of doing a little. I am sure it will be but a very little; and think of what we *might* do, what we might become, if we were helpers one of another in love, for, after all, what under the sun is to be compared to the quiet affectionate enjoyment of brothers and sisters who have been all the world to one another all their LIVES long? I have been speaking to William, and we shall see.

This is a queer concern, queerly written, but there is in it truth, and I would wish you seriously to think on it. Remember the watchwords are “a conviction that I myself am sometimes in the wrong,” and a conviction that by mutual forbearance, though it may be painful for a while, much may be done.

Janet Aitken is up at Janet’s sewing her Drawing-room carpet. We are going up to-night in a body to Hart Street to Tea. I hope you are keeping your eyes open from morn to dewy eve. What a blessing it is to be able to enjoy these innocent plain things—a bit of green earth, of the sky, a flower, a child’s eye twinkling from under the long eyelashes, these are the common things which I would not give up for treasures of silver and gold, and neither would you.

I suppose you are not reading much. I do not think you need. *Look* and do. . . .

Therefore let the morn  
Shine on thee in thy solitary walk;  
And let the misty mountain winds be free  
To blow against thee.

Good-bye.

JOHN.

4 o’clock, Tuesday.

XII. To ALEXANDER SCOTT<sup>1</sup>

EDINBURGH, Sept. 1835.

MY DEAR SIR—I have to thank you for your kindness in sending Fanny Kemble's Dramatic Sketch. I have read it over and over, and ten times over again; it is a bit of genuine, old-fashioned *true love*, so fresh in its wording, as if she had found out the long-lost "well of English undefiled" and drunk her fill of its strong, clear waters. This I suppose is owing to her early and keen relish for the old Dramatists. By the way, have you read *Ford*? If not, do as soon as you can, and tell me how you like *Pity She's a Whore*. I am just in the act of setting to a thorough reading of all these old fellows, with glorious *Ben* to begin with. I wish *you* were here to read them with. I have taken the liberty of sending you *Francis the First*; it is an amazing exploit for a "Wench" of 16. What a very true genius she is! Her journal lets this out more than anything else, and how nimbly she runs from the deepest bass of infinite melancholy to an absolute pinnacle of outrageous glee! As the Piano-maker would say, she has got the *extra* additional keys in both directions.

I was somewhat disappointed at not getting the Tract on Philip Von Artevelde and the unpublished remainder of the Journal. May we expect them soon? If you could realise the uproar of joy which an arrival from Uncle Alick makes, the agonies of satisfaction, the *multitudinous laughter* of the 6 throats, you would be much more charitable in furnishing these said throats with so cheap and so unexceptionable *Fun-Diet*.

I had some notion of telling you some of the ongoings at the Terrace, but really there starts up such a myriad of thoughts and things to be said and sung, "the which if they should be written *every one*, I suppose that even the world itself would not contain the *Books* that could be written." When the next Mail bag arrives I shall be very much gratified if there be anything, however *wee*, for me.

Give my most affectionate regards to John Scott,<sup>2</sup> and tell him that if to have taken possession *to the uttermost*, of sundry warm hearts, be an exploit worth his while, he has so done.—Yours sincerely,

JOHN BROWN.

<sup>1</sup> Uncle of Miss M<sup>c</sup>Kay, afterwards Mrs. Brown. He was a brother of John Scott, Editor of the *London Magazine*, 1820-21, regarding whom see Note to Letter CXXI.

<sup>2</sup> Son of John Scott of the *London Magazine*.

# Letters of Dr. John Brown [1835]

## XIII. TO JOHN TAYLOR BROWN

[Dr. John Taylor Brown is spoken of in the Preface to the first edition of *Horæ Subsecivæ* as "my cousin and lifelong friend." He was the grandson of John Brown of Haddington, and so belonged to an earlier generation than his friend. But, born in 1811, he was the younger of the two cousins, whose friendship began when both were scholars at the Edinburgh High School. He edited newspapers in different parts of the country, contributed a number of biographies to the *Encyclopædia Britannica* and the *Dictionary of National Biography*, and was the author of *Bibliomania*, a monograph greatly prized by book-fanciers, and other works. His paper *St. Paul's Thorn in the Flesh—what was it?* was inserted in the first edition of the *Horæ Subsecivæ*, and attracted the attention of Thackeray, who, not having observed the reference to it in the Preface, regarded it as Dr. Brown's own, and praised it highly! In 1863 he returned to Edinburgh, and for the rest of his life lived in a quaint old-fashioned house commanding a magnificent view of Arthur's Seat and Salisbury Crags. There he gathered about him books (they must come first) and friends, and surrounded by them—enjoying life to the end—he survived till his ninety-first year.

Dr. Taylor Brown's tribute to his friend's memory, *Dr. John Brown, a Biography and a Criticism*, gives only a faint idea of what he wished to accomplish, or of the hours and years which he spent steeped in thoughts and recollections of the friend to whom from earliest days he had confided all that to him was deepest and most sacred, and whose unwavering affection he cherished as one of the greatest blessings of his life.]

Thursday [1st Oct. 1835].

MY DEAR JOHN—I would have written yesterday, but was so engaged getting everything ready for sending off my mad man, that I had no time. He is now away to Aberdeen to an Asylum, with the conviction as strong as death that *God* is the *Devil*, and in this way good and evil, joy and sorrow are all accounted for in the most satisfactory way. He argued for a whole day upon the impossibility of death, from our being told to be *always* ready for it! It is impossible, unless you saw him, to conceive the vigour, the nimbleness with which he argues, and the needle-like subtlety of his distinctions.

I am sure you would enjoy your Midnight and moon walk, be it wet or dry. I wish I had so much of your nonchalance in taking what comes and "thank you." Did you *see* the first uplifting of the *EYE LIDS* of the morning? and did you see "the Jocund Dawn stand tiptoe on the Misty Mountain tops," among the far Lammermuirs? If you did, you were the *richest* man of Monday the 28th Sept. How cheap and how genuine these common things—these *little* things are! Do you know these lines?

'Tis her privilege (Nature's),  
 Through *all* the years of this our life, to lead  
 From joy to joy; for she can so INFORM (What a word!)  
 With quietness and beauty, and so feed  
 With lofty thoughts, that neither evil tongues  
 Nor judgments of rash men  
 Nor greetings where no kindness is, nor all  
 The dreary intercourse of daily life  
 Shall e'er prevail against us, or disturb  
 Our cheerful faith that all that we behold  
 Is full of blessings.<sup>1</sup>

You understand something about "the *dreary* intercourse of daily life"—and "the heavy and the weary weight of all this *unintelligible* world," but you know also how it is lightened and made easy. I often envy your very miseries, the things that drive you inwards into the *Far in*, where, self-sufficient and self-contained, you may amid darkness—where the *light* is as darkness—sit i' the centre and enjoy bright day. I am going out to Callands to-day for the no other purpose of being all alone in the open air on the common road for 5 hours, and have a long and full-length *think* with myself. The other purpose is to see a *bairn* of 3 years old, the daughter of my Uncle's ploughman's wife, a perfect image of sweet *wildness*. I wish you saw her with her long eyelashes and her unfathomable eyes, and her *eerie black* blink. If you did you would understand some of my love for her. I have wandered days with her among the hills, leading her in my hand, and every now and then asking her to open wide her eyes that I might stare into their depth. She will kiss nobody in the world but her father, mother, brothers and sisters, and me! but as usual I am running wild.

Let me know what you have been doing, or rather what you have been thinking, which is after all the only real *doing*. Have you looked into *Saturday Evening*? Read the chapter "The Recluse." As for Coleridge, I know how you will be sitting literally devouring him. Read "Mine eyes make pictures," and "Youth and Age," and "All Nature seems at work," and the bits marked in "Remorse." Let me have a perfect world of a letter. As for having an end of what might be said between us, I suppose even the world itself could not contain the books that might be written.—  
 Yrs. in great haste, J. BROWN.

<sup>1</sup> Quoted from memory. See Wordsworth's "Tintern Abbey."

## Letters of Dr. John Brown [1835

Recollect and give me a few more touches on the goings on of human and BEUTE<sup>1</sup> life in your den.

We shall mutually, after enormous consideration, get up a work entitled "A Monograph of the Species of Man, Ἀριστοκράτης, with drawings after the life," Mr. — being the first.

### XIV. TO THE SAME

18th November 1835.

MY DEAR JOHN—How delighted I am with your letter, so prompt, and so plump into the heart of the business. I am very proud of having you as a friend who can write as you do, earnestly, strongly, heartily, and I am proud of having Logan<sup>2</sup> as a friend, who can do anything that would make you think and write as actively and as purposely as you have done. I do not think you are right about the bird; you have however said just the very things that were ordained from all eternity to be said about the poem. Logan says he never in all his existence felt more essentially flattered. I can assure you he feels very truly all you have said, and has as much increased his thought of you as of himself, and that is saying no small say, for him. He will write you himself, and will, he says, set vigorously to finish it, more to please and satisfy you than from any other motive.

You are so full of Judas that you say nothing of your body and how it fared in your *darkness-trudge*. Any new things seen, heard, or imagined? Do you know, Logan says, and I say, you should be able, not to write poetry, because that you cannot help doing, but to drill poetic thoughts into melodious chime. I wish very much you would think seriously about this. You never can have such an opportunity as at present. What would you think of doing into verse such an everyday story of loving-kindness as the old Carrier and his wife? Write me at least a Sonnet on the things you see and hear at this season.

<sup>1</sup> Dr. Brown observed *character* in dogs as he did in men and women. One day he saw a large dog pass in charge of a coachman whom he knew. "There goes good John," he said, "with that animal which people call 'a magnificent St. Bernard,' but he is a complete intake, like many men and some women! He has a good face, handsome figure, and *no brains worth mentioning*." It has been told too that on coming home one day, his first remark was, "I have seen such a good conscientious dog; his muzzle had come off and he was bringing it home in his mouth."

<sup>2</sup> The late Alexander Logan, Sheriff of Forfarshire. See *Horæ Subsecivæ*, 3rd Series, p. 274.

I have got the beautiful edition of Byron in 6 volumes, *spleet* new, from Brown for 12/!!! Byron is only a sort of Lieutenant-Colonel in the army of Heaven, certainly not a Field-Marshal. How true that his men are passions personified, not persons impassioned! A great proportion of the worth of his poetry is in its furious ill-temper, and says very little in pure serene thought or feeling. Now though poetry is no one thing, but rather an *attitude* into which all things may be put, still I think the essence or *core* of poetry lies more in *feeling* than in passion. Eloquence belongs more to the latter; indeed transcendent, downright passion in anybody's mouth is intensely interesting, but not necessarily poetical. Do you understand what I would be at? I shall only repeat it—Byron's popularity is more owing to his telling stories of the terrible passions with fervent strength in compact numbers, assisted very much by alliteration!

I send you out by Sam<sup>1</sup> 2 Volumes of Wordsworth which keep for my sake and his, and read them with reverence.

Did you see the Firmament to-night (Novr. 18th)? It was a transcendent *fire*-night. I never saw the Aurora so insufferably bright, so profuse, so quick and powerful, so sharp as a thousand swords. It often looked as if there were great gashes made in Heaven, letting in the light from *outside*. I hope you saw it. If you did, tell me about it and write me a full account of the doings aloft in the lift.

How delighted I am with the *Border Minstrelsy*, and how enraged I feel, that owing to these wretched things called circumstances, I cannot and probably never will see the places, or wander at will among the Hills. What a glorious tramp, tramp along the land, they trudged; What secrets which have been hidden in the everlasting hills and in the fountains of waters which move among them would *we* not reveal—the day may yet come. But I am raving. I do not say anything about your religious life, indeed so ashamed am I to say a word about religion that this prevented me. I hope you are more at peace with yourself and your Maker on this than I am. Write me frankly about this as about all things, and believe me, yours ever affectionately, JOHN BROWN.

<sup>1</sup> Samuel Brown, M.D., grandson of John Brown of Haddington; author of *Essays, Scientific and Literary* (1858), on Chemistry, etc.

# Letters of Dr. John Brown [1836]

## XV. To THE SAME

EDINBURGH, 19th July 1836.

MY DEAR JOHN—I should have written 10 days ago. Write me immediately, telling me when you mean to leave Newhall. I am still strong to come out. Logan is keen to come; may I bring him? We could perhaps come out on Friday evening, see you and your neighbourhood and ancient walks, come in the early morning to Prestonpans, and come home right filled with jest and youthful jollity. We 3 would make the heavens ring with our multitudinous laughter. Now, do write. I have been in rather a poor way since I saw you, feeding miscellaneously and *therefore trashily*. I lie too long in bed and break my spirits for the coming day's drudgery. But I am a little better. I have been meditating with some fixedness on a Medical Book which I mean to write instantly, for my own and not for the public good. I have already thought much of it; you will like it, I think, if ever anything is done to it. I know nothing would firm and gird up my loins like *doing some one thing, writing some one write*.

I have been proving to-night that "a thing of beauty is a joy for ever." I was down to see Kitty<sup>1</sup> and had a very delicious talk with her. I hope soon to *report progress*, but of this when I see you. I cannot write. I had a walk with her the other day, and got her virgin, fresh thoughts on Shakespeare and Milton. She is reading both. Her blunt, sturdy remarks would have greatly amused you. She has been reading the *Midsummer Night's Dream*, and was delicious upon Puck and the uncouth joking of immortal Bottom, nor did she miss the passion of Hermia, etc. . . .

I must end, so good-bye, write speedily.—Yrs. evermore,  
JOHN BROWN.

Tuesday.

## XVI. To THE SAME

[August 1836?]

MY DEAR JOHN—I am, as you may see, again at the old dirty work of putting off. I got your letters duly. How regaled I was with their strength in the midst of all the stale, flat, and unprofitable dreariness of common things; but keep steady, don't get instantaneously delirious, let there be no case of abduction, and understand the verb *captivate* in its

<sup>1</sup> *Horæ Subsecivæ*, 2nd Series, p. 301; also *Dr. John Brown*, by J. Taylor Brown, p. 87.

primitive meaning; indeed, let it be a verb only as *suffering*, not doing. I mean, don't be in a hurry, else you may damage the whole business. Where have you found that *text* of antique loveliness, "an exquisite lady full of most blessed conditions"?<sup>1</sup> BLESSED CONDITIONS! It is so utterly the thing, that I gave it to my "exquisite lady" for her judgment, and she was all ear and took it in, and will never through all eternity forget it, as I know by the flash of her eye. By the way, *she* is in Glasgow this very night; she has gone with her father for 3 days' fun, God be with her. She intends calling on Miss ——. By the way, I was asking William the other day what he thought of Miss ——. He said she was too proud for him, but that she was worthy of Milton's sonnet "Lady that in the prime of earliest youth," and I believe him right. But I beseech you, be not *too* impetuous, and reckon not too much on the Almightyness of high poetry. I rather think, though she may have the vision and even the faculty divine, they have been purposely neglected. But I am talking worse than nonsense; indeed, I am not sure *how* guilty I am in encouraging and even pushing you on in this glorious study of imagination. I should rather exhort you to be "diligent in business" than "fervent in spirit." I am rejoicing in Coleridge's *Aids*, Lion's marrow, though sometimes in a vein of impracticable hardness or unsearchable depth, still everything has the smell or savour of the afore-said *Murrow*, but with all this pleasure there is a hard, cruel sorrow too at my own miserable bungling of an adult age. Do let us try and mend each other. I am fundamentally wrong; now . . . if you will help me I will help you. I want a principle *within*. My mainspring has been broken long ago, and I just give the wheel a random shove, here a little, there a mickle, and so I go without rhyme or reason.

I had one most exquisite day full of most blessed conditions. On Friday, at 3 A.M., Isabella and I started for Callands. I read "Comus" as we walked, straight through. Its length on the highway is 6 miles some odds, of "Lycidas" a mile, of "Arcades" barely one-half. I sometimes think I should refrain from these ideal dainties, but were it not for them and a being perhaps as ideal "*I wad dee*," and not meaning to *dee*, I hold on and continue the *Diet*, immortal diet, the very bottle of Salvation. Write soon, very soon. I have read your last over and over. The Blessed Conditions! I never tire of that.—Yrs. ever,

JOHN BROWN.

<sup>1</sup> A blending of phrases from *Othello*, Act II. Sc. iii. and Act II. Sc. i.



## Letters of Dr. John Brown [1837

### XVII. To ALEXANDER MACFARLANE<sup>1</sup>

*April 4th, 1837.*

MY DEAR ALICK—I should have written to you, as I promised, long, long ago—but better late than never, but better soon than late, and when you are as old a man as your Edinburgh Doctor, you will know, that nothing is so well done as when it should be done, and that *putting off* is a bad system. You mind<sup>2</sup> our ride out to Morningside in the Noddy,<sup>3</sup> and do you mind the big stone at the roadside which I promised to tell you about? It is called the Hare Stone<sup>4</sup> or *Stane*, and is now built into the wall, or rather the wall is built round it, for it was there all by itself some hundred years before the stones of the wall were dug out of their quarry. It is now used as a milestone. Well, Alick, just about the same time of the year that you passed it, 300 years and more before, James the Fourth, King of Scotland, set up his Standard, a long pole with a flag.

So here is the Hare Stane in 1513, with a soldier holding the great banner of Scotland. James was gathering his army together to make war against England. One hundred thousand men saw the Banner waving from the Hare Stane, and on the 9th Septr. the King and his nobles and many thousand men died in the battle of Flodden Field. Flodden field is near *Coldstream*, which is not far from Berwick. . . . I hope you are very diligent, and very loving and obedient to your Mother. You will never in this wide, big world find anybody who will care half as much for you, and who will have half as much right to be loved and served by you. You have two *Fathers*, both we hope in Heaven, one whose prayer you often say, but you will never have but *one mother*; mind this. My five-year-old hands held the cord of my mother's coffin, and I am every day knowing more and more of my exceeding great loss. But she was happy to die, and has been now twenty years in Heaven. You have many friends there too. Your Grandmother,<sup>5</sup> who lived very near its gates all her life, and was always with her face towards it, has gone away there too, and is now *seeing God*, and walking in His light. Perhaps she may sometimes think of her grandson Alick, and hope that God may keep him from sin and bring him by and by up to Himself and to

<sup>1</sup> A young cousin of Mrs. Brown.

<sup>4</sup> Or Bore Stone.

<sup>2</sup> Remember.

<sup>3</sup> Cab.

<sup>5</sup> Mrs. Scott.

her and to Abraham and all the Bible worthies. But Alick must not be heedless himself; he must seek, if he would find.

I wish, my dear Alick, I were down in Aberdeen or you up in Edinburgh, for it is sad, roundabout sort of work, this writing; and then, you see, if you serve me as I have you, I shall get your answer in about half a year.

Write me if you please, and tell me all your news, what you are doing, what reading, and so good-bye.—Your affectionate

DOCTOR JOHN.

### XVIII. TO HIS BROTHER WILLIAM

35 LONDON STREET, *Sunday, July 15th* [1838].

MY DEAR WILLIAM—How I have been able *not* to write you before this, is more than I can in anywise make out. Something is wrong, but what I know not. On Monday I walked from Linton to Callands, and as I walked past the Frizell's house on Langstruther Burn, I was violently seized with shame and contempt for all this—I felt the need of you so sharply, so unconditionally. Do you remember the place? Of course you do; well, I only wish I had the assurance of some day or other being there with you, and scaring the whaups<sup>1</sup> and mosscheepers<sup>2</sup> with our exulting laughter, our overrunning mirth. It will come to that. But all this is away from the point. I wish I knew the *rationale* of my not writing; it is not want of affection, that's Poz, nor want of material, nor want of time, than which last there is no more miserable excuse, for no man has no time to do what he ought to do. I read your letter to Isabella. The ring and fair play for Paul is good.<sup>3</sup> I mean to regale my father with it.

I wish I knew more fully what you do. Write the history of one day and send it down; that will give me some idea. There are some things I wish you and I would immediately do. 1. Make up our minds on the matter of religion—settle it one way or other, and if God be God follow Him; if Baal or the Devil or Nobody be God, then follow him. 2. Make up our minds on Politics. This we do not so much need, but we do very much. We lack *Knowledge*; we have lots of opinions. 3. Some practicable theory of life—some scheme which might be consistent enough to be one thing, and yet

<sup>1</sup> Curlew.

<sup>2</sup> Marsh titmouse.

<sup>3</sup> A reference to the boxing-ring. The idea evidently is, Let St. Paul have fair play, and he will give a good account of himself.

## Letters of Dr. John Brown [1838

open enough for adaptation to occasional deviations. I mean that we have some one thing or another which we shall do our best to accomplish in our lifetime. I cannot give any one an idea of the extent to which both of us, but especially I, have bungled my capabilities and made void the end of my existence—how I have missed the great mark. My work has been a sort of *orra* thing—an affair of byeplay—how little earnest, severe, ultimate thinking there has come out of me upon anything, and above all on my profession. Do you feel this, my own dearest brother? and how do you think we may mend matters, and will they ever be mended? I have some ideas, but whether they go further than being painted on the windows of my brain is another thing. One is a treatise on *Pain*, including uneasy and *abnormal* sensations. Another is on Symptoms as indications of disease. Another, upon the essential and irreconcilable difference between Medicine and all other Sciences. I mean to read a great deal now, and to endeavour to make out what I *mean* by my present practice. Will you try and do the same? Above all, I am eager to know what is my INSTANT, IMMEDIATE DUTY and to do it. I have an essay for the “Medical” on the Moral Treatment of Insanity. I have been thinking a little about it. . . .

I am in a queer state—very unsettled, and yet very far from being prevailingly unhappy. I have got several very good new patients, and have plenty to do. If you could only come here, and if we two *would* but do what we *could*, we might be just the very two happiest brothers in this or any world. Why shouldn't we?

Now write me the History of a day,<sup>1</sup> and tell me about your horse, and your trowsers, and your *tout ensemble*, and the people you see, and the thoughts you think, and the books you do not read but would like to read. I have been at Sir Thomas Browne's Life again, delighted with it—quite. I have got Gillman's *Life of S. T. Coleridge*, but I read almost none,—read Wordsworth for ever, and Milton and Shakespeare—read “The Kitten and the falling leaves.” I was at Callands seeing Maggy, who has been very ill. I went down to Torbank and saw Mrs. Alexander's son. Uncle Aitken thinks *Briggend* would be a capital place for a Surgeon. Poor Alexr. Brown<sup>2</sup> has come home very ill.

<sup>1</sup> Dr. William Brown was at this date at Otley, near Leeds, with Dr. Spence.

<sup>2</sup> Brother of John Taylor Brown.

## 1838] Letters of Dr. John Brown

I have not examined him, but I fear it is all up with him. He is a fine accomplished fellow—a little pedantic. . . . I do mean to see you at York and take Isabella with me. Write me how much money you wish. Young Spence does not go till the first of August. The house<sup>1</sup> is tolerable, the bookcase very good—the fender *immaculate*—everything well enough but the *Inhabitant*. Send the *Examiner* as often as you like. I have given it up. Be economical, as you value your peace of mind. Good-bye. I am so sensible at this moment of *wanting* you, that I care not to say another word.—Your own brother, JOHN BROWN.

This is a stupid, vacant sort of letter; better will be soon. This is the Miscellaneous *froth*; the clear strong liquor *is* and will be seen to be.

### XIX. TO THE SAME

[EDINBURGH], October 1st, 1838

MY OWN DEAR WILLIAM—Here I am once more, thanks to the Almighty, Isabella, and Dr. Scott.<sup>2</sup> It has been a strange, rapid, out-and-out sort of thing, but don't think from this that I am thoughtless about it. Well, when down at the Terrace on Friday night (Sep. 21st) writing to Andrew, I felt my throat turn suddenly sore and my breath get difficult, went home, couldn't sleep, got up, could not eat, went out, frequent pleasant creepings over me, went into a bath at the Infirmary, worse of this, all the blood inside, fought away till 3, went home to bed, and sent for Sandie Peddie; no sleep; Sunday going on worse and worse; no sleep. Monday throat desperate, getting afraid about myself, at 12 noon sent for Scott, who looked very glum, 6 leeches had been put on on Sunday, mustard, etc., no sleep. Tuesday, throat ecstatically painful, pulse very quick, all the time headache very bad, alternately in badness with the throat. On Tuesday afternoon 12 leeches behind the ear, no better, bran poultices everlastingly, no good. Sent for Scott at 12 at night. He bled me to more than 16 ounces, with instant relief, how delicious! nothing in the world like it. He is a wise wight that Scotus. He went off; a quiet but sleepless night, throat still very sore. Scott and Peddie saw me

<sup>1</sup> He had just moved into the house from which the letter is dated.

<sup>2</sup> See *Horæ Subsecivæ*, 1st Series, p. 355.

## Letters of Dr. John Brown [1838

about 7. I told them I was sure ulceration had begun; so it had with a vengeance, a hole I could lay my thumb in on one side, and a smaller on the other. Nitrate of Silver liberally applied, Dr. Scott looking black enough, muriate of Morphia, slept from 9 till 11, awoke worse and worse, ulceration, I fear, going on. Scotus sent for again at dead of night, came, looked grimmer than ever, bled me till I fainted, about 16 ounces. I awoke and saw him brooding over the pulse with a face smiling with perfect delight. This did the business, and all has been easy enough since. It was a queer affair, not a common inflammatory sore throat, but as if a Fever had been interrupted, aggravated, and destroyed by virulent sore throat and then *it* bled to death. As for Scotus and Isabella I back them against the field. Scotus is a *wizard*, a man of intuition and certainty, a man who both *kens* and *cans*.

How we did miss you! I absolutely groaned for you, and if it had not been so speedily ended I would have written for you to come instanter. But now that it is ended, I am very grateful for having been kept alive and allowed some more time here. What a disrespectable thing it is to be so unready for such a thing, so miserably behind with everything that is necessary for going through such a transaction! I wish both of us would think a little more to the purpose about this. This is a very selfish letter. I got yours and was pleased with other things in it besides its length. I am doing nothing just now but reading and eating and being asked for, Syme and Scott looking in and laughing away and asking for you. I have read Southey's *Life of Bunyan*, the *Elixir of the Devil*, the Fifth volume of *The Doctor*, etc., besides lots of Shakespeare's Poems, and Carlyle's third volume of the *Revolution*. It is glorious; and now I am regaling myself with *Midshipman Easy*, a most exquisite book, and then I mean to have at the *King's Own*. I go out to Callands on Friday, where I will be till that day week. I shall need it, as I was not at all well for a long time before this; but no more about me myself. I have fulfilled my promise and sent you a medical letter. Alexander Brown is off. Write him if you have time, and write me whether you have or no. All your ideas about Brecks,<sup>1</sup> etc. etc., will be punctually attended to. Give my best love to yourself and nobody else, and write very soon.—Your own brother,

JOHN BROWN.

<sup>1</sup> Trousers.

## 1838] Letters of Dr. John Brown

I have no politics for you, but you shall see my *thoughts* upon this soon in print. Michael, not the Archangel, but Thomson is to be the Editor of the *Pilot*, and Coventry Dick and I are to illuminate the world. Universal suffrage I wish, because it is right *a priori*. Education to be as free as religion, but no more.

### XX. TO JOHN TAYLOR BROWN

CALLANDS [7th Oct. 1838].

MY DEAR JOHN—Here I am in the heart of the Hills, wandering about as I like in the stubble-fields and on the Hill-sides, filling myself with health as full as I can hold. Nothing can be more delicious. A rapid, fierce, but clean disease working its will for 3 or 4 days, 40 ounces of blood lost, no sleep for 4 nights running, desperate pain, total starvation, and then this ended at once, and health and a clear inside setting to work to make up. The mind very willing meanwhile to lie and rest in the serene and blessed mood when pleasure lives to pay tribute to *Ease*, and to exert itself merely in existing and in caring for the well-being of its *drudge*, the poor damaged *Body*. Everything out of doors, indeed beyond the *skin*, is in tune with all this. The whole Earth and the whole Heavens possessed with entire quiet—all things calm and the peaceableness beyond expression. The folk indoors without bustle, without *news*, without any activity of thinking, but with ceaseless issues of affection; and then to feel that one has a right to be petted, and to be *silly*, and to go to bed early, and to do and get whatsoever one likes. I got your kind hearty note in bed when I was recovering. Thank you for it. I shall not see you in Glasgow. I have a plan of going down the Tweed to Berwick, for no other end but to see that Sweet-heart, that wise fond creature who is living with her Aunt.<sup>1</sup> She is well, though with a face of permanent substantial thoughtfulness, caught at that point when it stops short of *sulness*. When I was ill she wrote me several notes of the most *utter* affection. I never read anything so perfectly satisfying, and this all done with a sort of Maidenly shamefacedness and a begging not to be thought forward. But you will get all this yet, I hope—the sooner the better—the

<sup>1</sup> The aunt of Catherine Scott M'Kay was the wife of the Rev. Dr. Balmer, Secession Minister at Berwick.

## Letters of Dr. John Brown [1838]

more the better. How are you? Tell me fully. How is she? What is she, tell me fully too. I wonder very much what the state of her *mind* is, what is going on about and in the Præcordia. Do you know, do you guess, or do you let that wisely lie open? Perhaps this is best. Poor Sandie, God be with him and heal him. He is one of the best and most thorough thinkers I have seen. I wish I had you here—to go with me one whole day to and fro among the sedate, broad-shouldered, *serious* Hills that are lying about like Mountain *Cubs*, as shapelessly shapely and as innocent and strong as such Cubs might be expected to be. I have a little stout pony *on* which I walk; it goes everywhere and climbs like a goat; and then I have a little Terrier of infinite humour and *glegness*, running like a *Whittret* everywhere, and killing everything it can discover—moles, land rats and mice, and an occasional weasel. But I begin to weary for *doing*, and feel that I will very soon have no excuse for being here. But I must be done, the Carrier is waiting, so good-bye, my dear John.—Your ever true friend,

JOHN BROWN.

### XXI. TO HIS BROTHER WILLIAM

[EDINBURGH], 27th October [1838].

MY DEAR WILLIAM—I am ashamed of myself. I meant to have written from Berwick, but you know what the pavement of Hell is. I am so angry at myself because you must think it unkind, very unkind, but no more of this. I hope by this time you have got your breeks, etc. I wonder how you are, if you are very uncomfortable, if you have no sort of glee, if it is really the dreary intercourse of daily life. Never fear. Time the Healer is arriving quickly with healing under his great wings. How I like Hartley Coleridge! I read him by the fireside at Callands with the very greatest delight. Do I vex you by telling you all this? I must give you my story. I returned from Berwick on Saturday. First of all, on yesterday 3 weeks, I settled myself in the Dumfries Mail with Pea jacket (greatcoat) on, etc., and the new *Edinburgh Review* in my hand. It was, as you must mind, superb weather. I read the whole of the Thunderer's article on Fox, etc. Have you? *It* is as superb as was that day—so free and powerful and frank and great-souled. I am sticking up for Lord Brougham more than ever. He is quite

right about Canada. Well, I read without ceasing, excepting looking up now and then to identify the familiar places. I was at Callands for a week—very happy, riding about all sorts of byeways on the pony. I was weak and slept ill, but nevertheless I was very happy. If you had only been there, you and Kitty—and Isabella, who is above all price! I read Macaulay's *Sir William Temple*—good, not quite so splendid as usual, but sound and powerful; you must read it. On Friday I rode to Biggar, where I was till Saturday forenoon. Robert Pairman went with me to Symington. All things there continue as they were since the foundation of my world. The place seems to dislike all change. I saw Thomas Spence and his wife;<sup>1</sup> she asked as fondly for "William" as if she was going to put you in your cradle. Away to Mr. Tweedie's, then cross to Thankerton, Quothquhan, etc., to Greenshields to see James Archibald, then home to Mrs. Brown's to tea, where I talked even on for some hours to my great relief,—I was so overcome with memories of all kinds, but the prevailing feeling was gladness that I recollected so much. Uncle Johnston<sup>2</sup> is much better; he is out of his old home and has sold it. He lives behind his mother's. I do so like him. My Aunt is well and jocose as ever. . . . Well, after seeing innumerable people, I got off by 1 to Kirklaw hill and from that by Broughton, Drummelzier, Stobo, etc. I was going over all that mystical night walk to Moffat, our supping at the toll gate, our breakfast at Crook. . . . I then rode to Rosebank, where I had to meet Dr. Craig. To my surprise along with him is Young, who frankly shook hands with me, and delivered an urgent message from — to him and dine with him, which I, having my cord-de-roi-coat on, could not do to my sorrow. Up to Callands all right, at home all Sunday reading the *Christian Repository*. Monday down to Peebles to Breakfast, and ran about with Craig for 2 or 3 hours, then down to Innerleithen by the south side of the Tweed, dined with Wm. Craig at Innerleithen, rode to Galashiels by Elibank, Holylee, and Ashiestiel; got the door opened by Big-Head<sup>3</sup> and was very happy with him. In the morning he got the Flesher's pony and rode with me to near Smailholme. He was a rare sight on the white pony, with his Mackintosh sheet on, dodging away right merrily. At Kelso I got a coach to Berwick. I found Kitty and Mr. and Mrs. Balmer

<sup>1</sup> See *Letter to John Cairns, D.D.*, p. 8.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* p. 16.

<sup>3</sup> The Rev. James Henderson, D.D., Galashiels. See sketch of him, *ibid.* pp. 84-90.



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waiting me at the end of the Bridge, and at 7 o'clock was in the snug parlour Golden Square, getting my coffee and relating my adventures, and being deliciously petted for my delicate state of health! Here I stayed till Saturday morning. I was very much the better of it, more so than of any other bit of the fortnight. Kitty and I were constantly together, and as happy as we had power to be. William, I charge you, love truly, firmly, knowingly, and you will have such a reward as is above all telling. *They* went to bed at  $\frac{1}{2}$  past 9; we sat up as long as we liked. Poor body, she's dull but content—what W. W. calls "*sage content* and placid melancholy." I got a gig on Thursday, and away we two set to Norham and Twizel and Flodden, and we two were away all alone for 9 hours. It was a sour, wet, boisterous day, but we were above it all. Don't be angry at this, and don't think I am forgetting you. I got home on Saturday; father well but thin, Isabella well and fat. My father very happy and affectionate and talkative. Both he and Isabella know my attachment to Kitty; I am glad they do. I often so weary to see you and to know how you are at that very moment. Oh I wish the winter were past, and the time of the singing of birds and Psalm tunes by the two great Bilk brothers were come. Good-bye, my own dear dear William,—Yours ever—  
J. B.

### XXII. TO THE SAME

[EDINBURGH, 9th June 1839.]

John [Taylor] Brown has got some very rare and glorious Tracts of Sir Harry Vane. He got them in London when he saw Andrew M'Kay. . . . My head is running on Jedburgh, and will not give it up. Try and get the knowledge of ——'s present income, etc. Oh, if I could make £400 a year there and you the same or more, we would with the grace of God and our 2 dear wives be *Kænsidderable Kæmfortable*. But it is all a Dream, so down with it, but—be sure to get the greatest possible information about it. Try and learn from Reid when he means to go. I shall bring Wasp out with me. I am somehow very void of thought to-night; I often wonder what state I am in, whether I am in any degree under the influence of God's Almighty Spirit. I fear I am not, yet I have great relish for religion and am quite satisfied that there is nothing else worth anything. But I go on from day to day always about to be, and I see no likelihood of a change. . . .



MRS BROWN AS A GIRL

*As a young sketch by Mrs. Margaret Brown*



## XXIII. To THE SAME

*Friday, 2 o'clock afternoon!! [14th June 1839.]*

MY DEAR BILK—Here I am by a sort of miracle sitting quietly at this time of day writing to you. You would be again disappointed at no letter. I was in the Court of Session to-day hearing the Kirk Culprits censured and rebuked.<sup>1</sup> The Lord President gave it them stiffly. . . . How queerly Jeffrey was looking at the whole affair, Moncreiff as sulky as a beaten Bulldog, Gillies like a Lion of 100 years, untamed and vast, and Meadowbank like a cross between a monkey and a small tiger. I was in the Gallery, and on looking round whose eyes should I see surveying the whole scene with quiet glee but the eyes of the Rev. John Black, Liddesdale?<sup>2</sup> He is to breakfast here to-morrow. I saw Wasp yesterday. She had just been drawing a Badger, to the admiration of all the knowing ones in the Grassmarket, and to the perfect satisfaction and gratulation of Sandie Campbell. She first of all walked deliberately into the Box, and after a long and serious discussion with the Recusant Badger, *perwailed* on him to be dragged out; then as he was rushing in again, she instanter was after him, and after a very brief interview *perwailed* again, and would have cheerfully performed it over and over and 10 times over again.

I purpose coming out on Friday next week and staying till Monday, and taking a long Sabbath Evening walk with you anywhere, say to Bowden. I am not sure if it was very wise to write to Nichol about —, inasmuch as he may tell that I am thinking of leaving Edinburgh, which would be a pity. Nevertheless I don't much care; whenever you get any information one way or another, be sure and write me, that the dream may be ended. What a piece of work is man! . . . You are well off, to have the everlasting hills and the clear river in your eye all day. Howsomever I argue not against Heaven's hand or will, believing that the soul of good is in things evil and will one day be seen to be so. . . . I feel more real interest in my profession than ever, and I feel too that if my mind were relieved of these

<sup>1</sup> The Lethendy case. See Hanna's *Memoirs of Dr. Chalmers*, vol. iv. p. 126 ff., and Lord Cockburn's *Journal*, vol. i. p. 227.

<sup>2</sup> All through life Dr. Brown retained for the Rev. John Black the deepest respect and friendship. At his death he wrote to his son, the Rev. Dr. Armstrong Black, "As regards literature your father opened for me the gate beautiful."

## Letters of Dr. John Brown [1839

daurned distresses personal and pecuniary, I would make some real progress in knowing and managing disease. Like you I am far from satisfied with my own state; indeed I do not know what my state is, and would give anything to know. I am so distinctly *two persons*, a *good* and an *evil*. I think I realise the existence and character of the Almighty, and I do feel a reverence and a Godly fear, and a certain intense desire to be on His side. But, after all, this is only for a minute or two, and then I am the same thoughtless, impure Fool as ever. I *believe* it all arises from a want of belief in the truth of the Bible, and a want of real love for the Bible God, but, like you, I cannot order my thoughts by reason of darkness. I have nothing that I can write. John Brown is here; he goes to Stirling in a few days.

Half-past six. No letter from Kitty. I have just left Coventry Dick. He has a great desire to go with me to Melrose, so maybe *we* shall kim out. In that case we shall stay in the Inn. Isabella has just come in and told me of your letter. Really, mine own most all-demanding brother, you are rayther furious. The tooth key I shall bring out. I suppose you have one of Reid's, in which case you cannot be at a loss, as I hold that a good tooth-puller can pull with any key or claw; at least I can! So there's a piece of insolence for you. The pot of Electuary is for Mr. Henderson; so let him get it as soon as you can take it up to him. Tell him that I shall probably be out on Friday, but that if he is from home I shall not come, of which you can let me know. I am wearying exceedingly for Reid's going away. Try and sound him. I mean to walk out and to wear your Corduroy! so be composed. Janet Aitken is much better, and at this moment is lying on the sofa. She sends you her best love. Be sure you write instanter to let me know about Wasp. If I come out on Friday, I shall bring her with me; she is in beautiful condition, ready for anything earthly. Tell Reid that he will get *Chambers* out whenever I get a clean copy. Be sure and mind the pot. Good-bye just now—3 o'clock.

Best regards to Mr. and Miss Williamson, etc. etc. Tell me *all* you want me to bring out, and I beseech you be somewhat reasonable in your demands.

## XXIV. To JOHN TAYLOR BROWN

June 29th, and July 1st, 1839.

MY DEAR JOHN—I like it decidedly and everybody does ; even the Saturnine old man my father read it through and said not one word against it,<sup>1</sup> which with him is great praise, and your father, it seems, positively approved and glorified it. I am really pleased with the whole look of the paper, and especially with the first article. I am exceedingly glad for your sake. On my own part I never had any misgivings about the matter, being sure of my man and as certain that he would do the thing as that Willie's Wasp would draw a recusant Badger. But work hard and think freely, fully, and firmly. I am busy just now making up my mind upon some fundamental Doctrines, and maybe I shall send you a set of "Letters" on Civil Government, its Means and Ends. I am off to the Eildons on Wednesday, where I have resolved to be happy for 5 days. William is out, and I go to arrange all matters and screw his door-plate on. There has been a great discovery since you left, in the shape of a book called *Mad Moments, or Verse Attempts by a Born Natural*.<sup>2</sup> C. Dick is all on fire about him, declaring him a cross between John Milton and William Wordsworth. He is certainly a fine fellow, with a heart and soul and *voûs* of the true sort. There is a great deal of first-rate original matter in his poems, and his language is as natural as, and far more compact and forcible than, Southey's. Try and get a look at it. I was at Harvey's<sup>3</sup> at his farewell Bachelor's dinner. We had great fun. Allan the painter was there and was very delightful. Will you send a copy of the *Observer* to me at Melrose, directed Rev. Thomas Williamson? Good-bye just now, mine own Familiar. You are getting fair play at last and will yet be made manifest—so macte esto.—Yours ever affectionately—very,

JOHN BROWN.

By the way, be as brief with your articles as you can, and I think you might head them all.

<sup>1</sup> John Taylor Brown was editor of *The Stirling Observer* from 1838 to 1844.

<sup>2</sup> See *Horæ Subsecivæ*, 1st Series, p. 313.

<sup>3</sup> Afterwards Sir George Harvey, President of the Royal Scottish Academy from 1864 to 1876.

# Letters of Dr. John Brown [1839]

## XXV. TO HIS BROTHER WILLIAM

Monday night. [Autumn 1839.]

DEAR TIM—You didn't pass the Chevy?<sup>1</sup> Oh no! I didn't sleep all the way in, and I didn't find 37 things to be done instanter immediately on my kimming home, and I didn't diskivver that I had left my slippers in the house of the disgusting one. See you send them in this very day, or else I will sell your copy of Burnett's *Specimens*<sup>2</sup> to-morrow. I am very dull indeed. The quiet serenity of Melrose and the sort of dignified ease of that glorious Bar<sup>3</sup> is really not very good for one who comes home only to find that Mr. C—— has not sent any money in the shape of Board,<sup>4</sup> and that the term day is fast a-kimming. But never fear, married I shall be, and a Householder you shall be, before this day 8 months. Try and get rid of the Gipsy at any price, try and get into old Melrose; try and do without any more clothing for 8 months, till you buy the white Cassimere waistcoat and get the Hessians; Try and be

Diligent in business,  
Fervent in Spirit,  
Serving the Lord.

mean to keep up my soul, to take a ride out the length Barness<sup>5</sup> Castle Ferry Inn, to spend the day in mutual -----tion and then come home. Alexander Brown is still living, or rather dying. He told me yesterday that few things delighted him more than thinking of the free clear infinite range his thoughts would soon have about everything. He is a noble fellow and deserves to live for ever. . . .

I had a letter from Kitty; she is very well, though very anxious about this marriage, much more than about Prince Albert and the Queen. I mean to write to Lord Brougham telling him that if nobody else believes his word I do, and that I consider him the biggest if not the greatest man of his time, and conclude by suggesting to him the propriety of his

<sup>1</sup> The stage-coach Cheviot.

<sup>2</sup> George Burnett's *Specimens of English Prose Writers from the Earliest Times to the Close of the Seventeenth Century*.

<sup>3</sup> The "glorious Bar" was the parlour of the George Inn, Melrose, kept by Mr. Davidson. He was a man of unusual intelligence, and a keen Whig and voluntary. At the time of Dr. Brown's visit to Melrose political and religious questions were engrossing, and in the parlour of the "George" they were frequently discussed. It was in respect of these discussions that Dr. Brown makes use of the above phrase.

<sup>4</sup> At this time Dr. Brown took students as boarders.

<sup>5</sup> Probably Blackness Castle, on the Firth of Forth.

1839] Letters of Dr. John Brown

cutting Lyndhurst and the Roman-nosed "Corporal" and walking into the Temple and flogging the money-changers, etc.

*Thursday*.—Write immediately and send the slippers.

XXVI. To THE SAME

*Tuesday night.*

DEAR ROGER—To appease your fury, you will by the Chevy receive some unkeeman fine superfine cloth for our bodies. Tell Walter that if he does not put his whole soul into his shears and his needle, he may go and hang himself on any convenient rafter in the neighbourhood. The white Cassimere is not to be had for a week or two. Be sure and get your coat made rather wide and something like a riding coat.

I wish you would see what Deans is about with that eccentric table.<sup>1</sup> The *Mirror of the Months*<sup>2</sup> is not bound yet, and moreover you will not get it unless you send in Daniel; there's for you, my boy. Kitty is in London, which is cheering. You should *really* write Maister Andro. I like your words about — and her gudeman. You are a fine fellow, my mind is made up on that ultimately. . . .

I have not got Pickering's delicious 2 Vols., 4/6 each, of the *Holy Living and Dying*. Oh no!

I am glad you are busy. Write me very soon, that is, this very day (*Wednesday*). My skunkdom requires only to be known to be felt! I'll send you out Lord Harry's Dissertation on Political Philosophy. It is first-rate, I am sure it is, though nobody told me. . . . I wish you would write poor Isabella; in this you are more skunkish than I. Now be sure and lay upon Walter the awful responsibility under which he is laid.—Mine own familiar, yours ever more and more.

XXVII. To THE SAME

[EDINBURGH,] *Sabbath night* [1839].

MY DEAR BILK—Yesterday was no go, and yet we did go. John and I had a turn down to Portobello, I on the Dromedary, he on Solomon. We had a stiff gallop on the sands; he rides beautifully. . . .

Alexander Brown is very much worse: I don't know if he will live out the month. I sat a long time with him to-day

<sup>1</sup> The eccentric table was made by a local tradesman to the order of Dr. Brown, and used by him for the rest of his life. It stood close to his chair, and on it lay the books he was reading.

<sup>2</sup> *Mirror of the Months*, published anonymously [written by P. G. Patmore].



## Letters of Dr. John Brown [1839

in his bedroom, looking out upon Warrender Park with its sheep and sunshine and silence, and its trees quite still, and the great Pentlands beyond in their perpetual beauty. He is very clear in his mind and quite ready for the great Transaction. In many things I remember Bob<sup>1</sup> in him, yet Alexr. is far different, and though not so rare a creature is a noble one, more powerful; sound, serious thought in him, and fully as much strong affection, but without that infinite humour. William, do you know I am beginning to wonder what the meaning of all this is. I have been in the closest contact with the dying life of 3 very good men—Dr. Belfrage and these two, and yet how little have I been bettered by it all!—just relishing the beau ideal of the thing, as I did this afternoon these silly sheep on the sunny grass, that's all. May God keep at it in His infinite patience, and not let me go! I have given up now inquiring nicely into the state of my soul, I am so utterly *out* in all my attempts to make out the mystery of myself—wherein I am good, and wherein desperately wicked.

When do you think you could come in? I am very anxious to get something settled about Kitty. Everything seems to point to me and say, Marry by all means. . . .

I was at Miss Maconochie's on Friday night, and heard Mr. Ballantyne (one of the Ballantynes) and his son and daughter play Beethoven worthily—a fiddle, a Violoncello, and the piano, and *Bucher* the flute man. It was most entirely good. . . . Oh my Eye! if I could but get my ear gratified! If you and I were permitted to go together to Londing and thence to Paris and Milan and Vienna and Dresden and Berlin, and then to Londing again, and down to Oxford to hear the Choristers, and down to Canterbury to hear the Madrigals and Glees, and then bring down Clara [Novello], the Sweet Singer, and keep her in plenty and have her *warbling* once every night, and the "Mighty Kings" of a Sunday.

Be sure and write to Kitty. Now do this. It is very wrong in you not to have done so long ago, you SK ÒNDREL.

I am reading Dr. Aikin's Life by his daughter Lucy. I have got a most merry and quaint Cat, quite an oddity.

Mrs. "B." is not yet kim home, and the poor old Lion is growling occasionally but not loud enough to be heard at Thornliebank. Now write a long yepistle very soon. Read Spenser's Sonnets. Your own true

J U B B  
Y.

<sup>1</sup> Robert Callander. See Sir Theodore Martin's note appended to Letter No. CXXXVIII.

## 1840-1849

During these years life was full of vivid interest to Dr. Brown. For some time previous to 1840 he was engaged to Catherine Scott M'Kay. The long engagement tested and strengthened their love. Partly owing to her father's fault, money was scarce in the M'Kay family, and Catherine, bravely facing the fact, insisted on doing what she could to support herself. At that date to be a governess was in some degree to lose status, so she had to fight her mother's prejudice, but fight she did successfully, and accepted a situation in a family in the north of England. She went by sea to Hull. In a journal kept during her absence,—mere jottings—and most of it addressed to herself, Dr. Brown tells of his loneliness after leaving her on board and seeing the vessel sail. Before parting they had exchanged Bibles, and he tells her the first evening how he read in hers, adding, "I shall be so careful of all your flowers." This paragraph follows: "The next morning, I went down to my father's. I looked in at his study, he looked up, with a very heavenly look, from his sermon that he was quite full of, and asked how I was. I told him it had been a wild night—without thinking to allude to him about you. He said with such gentleness, 'Yes, but it was a land wind and would do no harm at *sea*.' Wasn't this good, dearest, he had obviously been thinking of you?" At last their path was made clear, and on June 4, 1840, they were married. His practice was gradually increasing. He was true as ever to intimate friends, while his circle of acquaintances soon included all who were in any way distinguished in Edinburgh society. His wife's beauty, her ability to take her full share in social gatherings, and his humour and general delightfulness in company made them welcome guests, and evening engagements were numerous. Three children were born between 1841 and 1846, two daughters and a son, the second daughter dying before she had completed her first year. In 1847 Dr. Brown was made a Fellow of the Royal College of Physicians, Edinburgh, and for a considerable time acted as librarian.

## Letters of Dr. John Brown [1840

It was during this period too that, without in the least realising it, his life of authorship was beginning. He had occasionally written letters and paragraphs in the *Scotsman* newspaper, and as even his shortest and most casual notes had the stamp of his personality, they arrested attention. It was Hugh Miller, "Geologist, journalist, man of genius," who induced him to write for the press. Miller was at that time Editor of the *Witness*, an Edinburgh newspaper which under his guidance exercised great influence. The Letters which follow tell the story. Dr. Brown's busy professional life did not interfere with his keen interest in the world of literature and of art. No rising star escaped his observation. The productions of Michael Angelo Titmarsh, both in pen and pencil, were ardently hailed. But even at this early date, and taking as he did very real delight in life, traces appear of the vein of sadness, of self-depreciation, which later became only too apparent. In the journal referred to there are self-reproaches—"Weak again," "Said no prayers," "Am I right in my way with —?" "Is my failing of wishing to please not at work here?" But joyousness triumphed. "Away I set splashing through the with J. T. B., talked largely about Keats, about every-felt myself clever and capable." Sunshine prevailed as clouds were there, but they passed.

### XXVIII. TO HIS BROTHER WILLIAM

*Monanday Nicht.* [4th May 1840.]

DEAR BILK—I am very glad you are so busy. This will keep you more kimfertible than *AENY THING*. You are all wrong in thinking Kitty, or, as I call her now, K A T E, is a tragedy queen, or has any heroic, savage beauties. She is a soft-hearted, silly girl, who loves with her whole soul; so, Master Tim, you must retract this imagination of thine. . . .—Ever your own Fool,  
J. B.

### XXIX. TO THE SAME

*MELROSE, Monday.* [1840. May?] ]

MY DEAR WILLIAM—Be sure and write me, and do in the name of Universal humanity write so that at least each alter-

nate word may be obscurely guessed at. Yesterday I delivered Captain Elliot of Langlee his shepherd's wife. The story was good. I was sitting in the church when that profane shrewd boy—I don't know his name, but he herds with Walter Cook and George the excusative—in rushed this boy, and giving a comprehensive glance over the whole church without the least special reference to me who was within an inch of his lug, he shouted out, "Where's Doctor Broom?" Everybody heard it. Well, I had Captain Elliot's man on a nice grey pony waiting for me. She had wished Clarkson,<sup>1</sup> but failing him, you were to be sent. Howsomever, Master Curtis, wishing to do what England expected him to do, got upon the sorrel mare. I, however, before this had got upon Cleareye, with my plaiden breeks and corduroy gaiters, and was off like a shot. The mare felt the greatness of the occasion, and trotted the whole way in her *great style*, to the astonishment of Captain Elliot's man, who began with "That's a *grudeish* trotter," and ended with "Lordsake, she's a deevil to gang," he galloping the while on the Captain's blood pony. Sorrel had no chance. I was in and had got the woman's heart by the time Master Curtis arrived. All went right, and from some passages since I would not wonder you are called up to the "Maister." In the evening I went up to Greathead and had my tea and a great deal of fun. Milne is doing well enough. I took out the stitches yesterday and strapped it. I saw Blaikie to-day and had a long crack.

## XXX. TO THE SAME

BERWICK, Tuesday night [10th June 1840].

MY DEAR WILLIAM—How are you and what of the house? All this must be asked by the pen not the tongue, bekase as how we Dual are not akimming to Melrose. Bekase as how—1st, Kitty feels queer in going to people she does not know; 2ndly, there is no possible way of getting our luggage sent forward from Kelso. I think it will be far better to come over to you as a separate affair. . . . We have been happy here—very; indeed I can sincerely say, I have never in all my life been so truly happy as I have been since I saw you. The high and serious Doctrine is a joy for ever, but I shall tell you about it. I have been a great deal with Dr. Johnston

<sup>1</sup> Dr. Clarkson, Melrose; "Master Curtis" was his assistant.

## Letters of Dr. John Brown [1840

and have enjoyed him exceedingly. He is the very man for you, free, spontaneous, sagacious, etc. Mr. Hume and his wife are very delightful folk, and they have all been very kind. To-morrow we go to Alnwick to see the house of the Duke of Northumberland and to hear Peebles worthily spoken of by David Paterson. But I must end. Write very soon. Kitty sends her sisterly love.—Yours ever as ever,

JOHN BROWN,  
The Elder Bilk.

### XXXI. To JOHN TAYLOR BROWN

35 LONDON ST., *Thursday* [16th June 1840].

MY DEAR, DEAR JOHN—. . . We went to Berwick, sleeping the first night at Dunbar. At Berwick we enjoyed ourselves greatly; the people were kind and genial, and of the right sort. We went from Berwick to Alnwick, which is a fine old place, the glorious Saxon Castle with Hotspur's chair . . . and the compact, formidable little town, and behind all a grim Moor, lying in its bare greatness just as it did 600 years ago, and over all the brave heavens clear as a sapphire never spent such a day. We are here now, and through the wretched pomp of receiving congratulation but even this we enjoy. Write soon to tell me you give me.—Ever your own Friend, JOHN BROWN.

### XXXII. To HIS BROTHER WILLIAM

*Sat. Night* [26th Sept. 1840].

MY DEAR RALPH—I suppose you got my noticule this morning. Well, again I reiterate that I shall be out by the Chevy on Monday, when I hope to see your respectable visage, and bid an eternal adieu or à Diable to your G L E E,<sup>1</sup> though not to glee proper and generic. I saw Syme operate twice to-day for squint; it seems more an unpleasant than a very painful operation. Janet has come home and all her company of little ones. You must make up your mind to being home on Thursday, as I cannot wait any longer.—For ever, my dear and respected R A L P H, yours ever indiscriminately,  
M U N G O G I B.

<sup>1</sup> Dr. William Brown was operated on for squint.

## XXXIII. To JOHN TAYLOR BROWN

35 LONDON STREET [March 6th, 1841].

MY DEAR JOHN—You have been specially good of late: your late article on the Report on Imports is *quite the thing*, strong, sound, quick and powerful. I do most cordially wish that you had “an ampler Ether, a diviner air”—something more genial, more hearty, something that you could put yourself thoroughly into, but that will come. I am delighted with this Irish Bill;<sup>1</sup> there is the principle of life in it. You see how gratefully all free, thinking men have taken it, how pleasantly and like themselves the Whigs speak about it. I only hope Government will stick to the £5 and go out upon it and dissolve, and if the Tories have the best of it in the New Parliament, let them have the coach to drive, till they will be glad enough to give it up; and *then!* You will see that the Government are going to do something about the Corn laws and the timber duties. Lord John Russell is a fine fellow, a true statesman and a man of integrity, and Buller is going to be something very good; he is made of the right stuff.

But you are laughing at me, so I conclude by 3 cheers for John Locke, John Milton, Jonathan Edwards, Sam Taylor Coleridge, and John Taylor Brown, and the Apostle Paul and Charleses Lamb and Dickens, and finally 3 most transcendent cheers for Mr. Richard Swiveller and his Marchioness.

The Exhibition is good, Wilkie more wonderful than ever for his *ideal reality* (if you can understand this), his perfect truthfulness. Etty has a glorious picture of naked women and men—a sort of beau ideal of voluptuous enjoyment. It is quite worthy of the words, *Paradise Lost*, Book XI. 582. Our Pharisees here think it indecent; Kitty and I think otherwise, and would have no objection to be presented with it. Maclise has a great Picture of Robin Hood which is much admired, but to me it is very disagreeable—so rakish and feverish, hot and hard in its colouring, and destitute of all reality except that of a Melodrama in a minor London Theatre, *well got up*. Harvey has a very characteristic picture of great beauty which has been sold for £250. It is the interior of a Scottish farmer's kitchen on Sabbath

<sup>1</sup> The Irish Registration Bill.

## Letters of Dr. John Brown [1841

Evening; he, the Farmer, is sitting in his chair, the open Bible with its cover of calf's-skin on his knee, with his homely, serious, thoughtful face, his comely wife beside him with her sonsy infant asleep in her lap, the big key of the door loosely held in his plump, sleepy hand. She is leaning somewhat forward, and anxious that her bairns should do well. They are standing in a sort of half-circle, all serious but all childlike. They have been saying their "Questions" and are listening to their father explaining some passage of Scripture. Behind them are the "Man servant and the maid servant," two rustic beauties. Through the window you see day gently passing into night, the time when "comes still evening on, and twilight grey has in her sober livery all things clad," when "silence accompanies" and when in a short while "Silence" will be "pleased." The whole picture is full of meaning. The solemn Shadows of Eternity are gathering over the family, as softly and yet as surely as the shadows of night are falling on the earth and all its children; and the father is seeing in his beloved children "Beings breathing thoughtful breath, Travellers between life and death," and after death the judgment; and beyond, that undiscovered country from whose bourne none of these little travellers will return; and he is telling them all this in his own homely way, and they are listening with simple wondering seriousness. The whole picture is full of the beauty of holiness without any fudge of sentimentality or overmuchness; it is delightfully toned. But this is, I must say, a most outrageous way of entertaining you. It is like an article for the *Observer* beginning, "our Townsman Mr. Harvey has," etc. I wish you saw it.

Write very soon. Kate the beloved sends her kind love and so does her most juncund Spouse. Now be sure and write thine own familiar,

JOHN BROWN.

### XXXIV. TO THE SAME

*Monday [14th March 1842].*

MY DEAR JOHN—I would have written you long ago, but have been bedfast for nearly a fortnight with fever. It looked ill at first, and I assure you it was no joke to think of leaving this majestic world and my dear dear wife, and going I hardly knew where, all alone, cold and reluctant; but 15 leeches at my lug did for the fever, and after 4 nights

of entire sleeplessness I got some twinklings of oblivion, but even yet I do not know what it is to get out of my depth. I have been amusing myself reading in parallel lines Cowper's and Sir Walter Scott's Lives, each giving the other's interest. I rather like this way of doing two things at once. What a fine fellow Scott was! as shrewd, as queer, as game, as warm-hearted, as Scotch as his Terriers. I have made one great discovery, and that is that Solomon is right in his rating a virtuous woman considerably above Rubies. For a sick, silly, spoon-be-fed man nothing is so fit, so delicious as a faithful, silent-stepping, everything-you-could-think-of-doing wife. I have lain for hours meditating on this joy for ever. Oh that you had one, mine own especial!

How are you? I did not get the *Observer* last week, which was a great vex. I made Kitty read me the one before, which was really good, both the political and the theological bit. Our sturdy Isabella holds your views out and out. I thought your argument beautifully set out, firm, simple, sufficient. . . . I saw your father to-day. I have hardly had any politics in my head for 3 weeks, but I am told Peel, that hummest of Bugs, has rather done a neat thing in the way of Taxes. This is more in his line than any great one thing. Nobody will ever forget, I hope, how he wrote himself down an ass for ever in that Corn-Speech of his. Write soon. I am going about, but am very weak and in the worst of all states, neither ill enough to be petted, nor well enough to be heroic and self-sufficient, so send me a few of your gnarled thochts. Kitty is out, but would certainly send you her best love. Duchess sends her best tail wag. Baby Helen is growing like a lily and eating like—just like anything!—Yours ever affectionately,

JOHN BROWN.

### XXXV. To COVENTRY DICK<sup>1</sup>

Wednesday, August 14th, 1844.

MY DEAR COVENTRY—I was very glad to get your kind letter and to hear that your beloved mother was somewhat better. May God restore her a little longer to health and her loving children. I have always admired and *envied* your singular affection for her, which had all the simplicity and strength and freshness of a child's. You should be very thankful that you have had such an opportunity of satisfying

<sup>1</sup> Sheriff-Substitute of Bute.



## Letters of Dr. John Brown [1844

this part of your nature. I never had, except during the unremembered days of merest infancy, and I have passed through life with a constant sense of having a faculty and wanting its fit object. My love for my mother has been stirring unsatisfied in me for 28 years, and will, I am sure, never cease demanding its own till I meet her again. I can remember standing at her grave, and wondering what sort of odd trick this was that so many grave men were playing, until they began pulling from me the little cord I had in my hand holding the coffin, and then I felt something of the reality of my terrible loss, never to see her again and her mild unchangeable eyes, and never to be near her and sleep in her bosom.<sup>1</sup>

You are quite right. A man's love for his wife is strong enough, as a present thing stronger than any other, but there is something peculiar and indestructible, and having its beginnings *unremembered* and deep in our first consciousness, in yours. Give my best regards to your mother. I always liked her. . . .

Tell Robert I envy him his own delight and your gratitude for what he has done for the mother of you all. Write, however shortly, how you are, and how she continues. Kitty is away at Hamilton, but I send you her best regards *on tic*.  
—Yours ever affectionately, JOHN BROWN.

### XXXVI. To JOHN TAYLOR BROWN

[January 1845?]

You must blow a trumpet and give Whigs, Rads, Tories, Leaguers, and the Universal people a *good hiding*. I entirely disapprove of the League making voters in the way it is. It is against the *rationale* of all representation and might be made to serve *any purpose*. The *Times* is right and Sairey Gamp and her Crony are wrong. The *Economist* seems to have more knowledge about it than any of them.

How much I liked your last notices; quite right to put your heel on Ainsworth.

Do you see *Fraser's Magazine*? If you do, read M. Angelo Titmarsh's articles every one; you will like them. He is the author of "Jeames's Diary" in Punch. Kitty and your wee wifie send their loves. Write very soon. J. B.

<sup>1</sup> See *Letter to John Cairns, D.D.*, p. 9.

# 1845] Letters of Dr. John Brown

## XXXVII. To THE REV. DR. JOHN CAIRNS

EDINBURGH, 4th August [1845], 51 ALBANY STREET.

MY DEAR SIR—My father left home this morning for Glasgow, and he desired me to give you his best regards and to say that it will be out of his power, greatly as he would have liked it, to come to you sooner than Saturday.

I had some hopes of making the circuit with him and hearing your first sermon,<sup>1</sup> but there is little chance of this. I have, besides my love for its inhabitants, a very peculiar love for Berwick. It was the place I took my wife to on our marriage journey, and it will ever have to me not a little “of the glory and the freshness of a dream.” My father is well, though wearied. He goes to Thornliebank to play himself, by Synodical appointment. You would have been delighted at the close of the Drama.<sup>2</sup> There was a Divine gentleness and peace came over the whole Synod, and every one felt in a better sense than of old that *Deus* interfuit. I don’t expect to see many more impressive or unforgettable scenes.

You must take care of your health. You are a big and powerful fellow, but you have a strong and relentless engine at work inside of you, and you must have a care. May God keep you long in this world for His service and for speaking His truth in its fulness and symmetry and power. Mrs. Brown unites in kindest regards. We shall always look upon you as a sort of Brother, so you know your rights and your duties.—Yours ever truly,  
JOHN BROWN.

## XXXVIII. To JOHN TAYLOR BROWN

Monday, 20th Octr. [1845].

MY DEAR JOHN—Have you room in the *Advertiser* for this notice of Syme’s letter?<sup>3</sup> If not never mind—if so then you must deal with it sovereignly and lick it into shape. The

<sup>1</sup> Dr. Cairns was ordained as minister at Berwick on 6th August.

<sup>2</sup> The reference is to a charge of heresy which had been brought against his father, the Rev. Dr. Brown, in the Supreme Court of the United Presbyterian Church. Two ultra-Calvinistic members of the Court framed a “libel,” accusing him of Arminian views. After a trial which extended over four days, the Synod unanimously found that there exists “no ground even for suspicion that he holds or has ever held any opinion on the points under review inconsistent with the Word of God or the subordinate standards of this Church.” See *Life of John Brown, D.D.*, by Dr. Cairns, pp. 247 ff.

<sup>3</sup> To Sir James Graham on Medical Reform.

## Letters of Dr. John Brown [1845

letter is really a good one and concerns that great Beast the Public very vitally, if it but only knew it. I shall send your Books to-morrow.

I have been in Stirling for a day and had a delicious drive with Dr. Johnston along the Touch Hills, by Gargunnock and the glorious BENS overlooking in their grim beauty that sea-like Carse with its creeping mists and scattered villages and farms and a wind-swept heaven overhead — beautiful exceedingly, and comfortable to my man-wearied Soul.

Sydney Smith, in one of his Sermons which I have just been reading, says something like this. It is good for a man to get out from a great City and into places where he cannot but feel the force of an Invisible Dominion and an Unseen Omnipotence, to see *some things* in the making of which neither he nor his kind have any share. Did you ever see these sermons? They are very good, and often full of beauty and godliness, with magnificent outbreaks of indignation and scorn.

If you put in this notice of Syme, would you send me 6 copies on Saturday? and write me at any rate to let me know how you are. . . . Kitty sends her love and wee wifie also.

J. B.

### XXXIX. TO THE SAME

8th Jan. [1846].

DEAR JOHN—Kitty has just given me a big lusty son, fighting and roaring and doing immediate battle when he was barely into this wild world of ours, quite a different fellow from the gentle and blessed Jane,<sup>1</sup> who was like Wordsworth's wonderful simile—"She was a dewdrop that the morn brought forth, ill fitted to sustain unkindly shocks; or to be trailed along the soiling earth; a gem that glitters while it lives, *and no forewarning gives*;

But, at the touch of wrong, without a strife  
Slips in a moment out of life."<sup>2</sup>

You may wonder at it, but her small face and her dear eyes have been more present to me the last hour than since her death.

Kitty is now lying there as (again Wordsworth) "over

<sup>1</sup> A daughter who died when scarcely a year old.

<sup>2</sup> See Wordsworth, "To Hartley Coleridge."

happy to be proud, over wealthy in the treasure of her own exceeding pleasure." But I must stay my ravings on conjugal matters, till you are not only almost but altogether such as I am by REASON of these bonds.

What a capital Bit that was in the *Advertiser*, your Happy New Year, quite the thing—a sort of Scotch Charles Lambism about it, and a true John Taylor Brownism through and through; moreover, a most shameless and public making of love to the great-eyed L.

I am delighted to hear from George Wilson that John David is to have an article on the Vestiges in the *British Quarterly*.

Miss H. Faucit is to be married to Theodore Martin in June for certain.

#### XL. TO THE SAME

[Jan. 20, 1846.]

MY DEAR JOHN—. . . They are divine creatures these children, and it was truly the Omniscient who said, "unless a man become as a little child he shall in no wise enter into the Kingdom of Heaven," or, in fact, into any *kingdom* worth the entering. Did you ever read Whately on Christians imitating children in their *views* of God as well as their behaviour to Him? It is first-rate. We have been getting famous discourses from the clear-eyed, vehement old man,<sup>1</sup> full of rich, inextricably bound together truth, and arguments heated and softened and made irresistible by holy passion. Give a man an absolutely right principle (a *radical* one) and he can hardly be extravagant.

The other day, after a most beautiful and informative and most *human* lecture on Mary, Lazarus' sister, anointing Jesus' feet, Judas (whom my father *did not* damn so outright and extempore as many men delight to do), etc., and the High Priests and the Rulers wishing to do for Lazarus to stop Christ's success, he suddenly, after reading in his best style the 2nd Psalm, "Why rage the Heathen," etc., pushed up his spectacles, and away his papers, and in his own old way flung himself at the people in these words, "Where is Jesus, and where is Lazarus *now*? and where are *these* Priests and Rulers of the people *now*? *Jesus* is gone up, and has sat down, and shall for ever sit, on the throne of the Universe, and Lazarus is with Him, seeing Him as He is. Where

<sup>1</sup> Dr. John Brown's father.

## Letters of Dr. John Brown [1846

THEY are, in Heaven or in Hell, I know not; but this I do know, that wherever they be, they are and shall for ever be *at or under His feet*"—and then ended. I think we will get him now to publish his Discourses on Peter in 3 large Volumes.

But I am really running on about *me* and my father at a pretty rate.

How gets on the Giant-minded, simple-hearted, always-by-a-necessity-of-his-nature-in-the-right John Cairns? Now do write me something long and something as good as the last, which was as good as it was short. . . .—Yours ever,

JOHN BROWN.

I have some great *projects* to tell you, but of this again.

### XLI. TO THE SAME

[10 Feb. 1846.]

MY DEAR JOHN—I was much the better of your letters. There is nobody writes to me as you do with such unstinted love. But you must beware and not spoil me with your  
it is a dangerous thing as I feel it. I am inwardly  
insanely vain, and it is this that makes me so  
nervous, so diffident as to my being able in words to let the world know all my miraculous gifts. This is *literally true*. I seriously wish you would in your next say nothing about what you like, and everything about what you dislike, either in thought or expression or general treatment. Now I rely on you. You are quite right about my tendency to excess in praise. This arises from 2 causes: 1st, from my constitutional vice (for it amounts to one) of wishing *to please* at all hazards: this is one of my greatest weaknesses. 2nd, From a real exaggerative tendency, arising from my passionate nature; this really interferes very much with my trustworthiness as a critic. It strikes me on reading my own writing, especially the one of to-day, that there is a great sameness in the cadences of the sentences, a want of long sentences, and of richness and roundness; too many exclamations, too many italics. Now tell me all about this. The people here praise it without any discrimination.

The sweetest praise I have got is my father's and yours and my own sturdy and delicious wife's, all three honest and

true as steel. They tell me they are greatly liked. David Hill, I was very glad, liked Duncan's character. Mrs. Duncan too liked it. I go to Harvey next. I have sent off *Life in the Sick-Room*. Tell me if Lizzy says anything about them, if she reads them. What a capital review of Miss Martineau, only a little too much praise for her ladyship.

When are you coming in? You must see Wilkie's picture; it is not one bit too much praised.

Kitty sends her love.—Yrs. ever,

J. B.

## XLII. TO THE SAME

[10th February 1846.]

MY DEAR JOHN—I hope by this time you have got my Budget. If you think the notice can be put into your paper, and if you can *read it*, then let it go; but if you find some trouble, as I am sure you will, you may let it lie over for a week and give me a *proof*; but don't do one single thing that will put you or anybody else to the smallest trouble. If it appears on Saturday send me 6 copies. You know my *weakness* and my innocent (?) vanity.

. . . In Lowe's last number Slick<sup>1</sup> appears more dissolute in thought and more nebulous in language than ever. Instead of like the Vestiges<sup>2</sup> stars, concreting from a fire mist into a nucleated body, Slick seems reverting from any body he ever had into his primordial fire mist.

Our love to all our friends—to Aunt Balmer, with her plentiful tea-talk and her hospitable face and voice; to James Balmer,<sup>3</sup> with his meek wisdom and placid melancholy, waiting till he gets a *new eye* in a new world, and wearying to join his mother and his brother; to John Cairns, who is Augustine, Calvin, Jonathan Edwards, and *himself* all in one; to Home, who is a poet *in posse*, as he is a regular "brick" and a first-rate *quoit-player in esse*; to his superb and deep-bosomed and hearted wife, who is an Evangelical mother of the Gracchi; to her daughters Prose and Poetry, the Real and Ideal—*Day* and *Night*; to Dr. Johnston, the smiling-teethed and benevolent laughingest of Euphrasian Doctors; to Mrs. Cunningham, the loving and timid mother of

<sup>1</sup> Judge Haliburton, the creator of "Sam Slick, the Clock-Maker."

<sup>2</sup> R. Chambers's *Vestiges of the Natural History of Creation*.

<sup>3</sup> Dr. Balmer had lost the sight of one eye.

## Letters of Dr. John Brown [1846

numberless children ; to her robust Sister, who has a heart and a fist and a fearless eye ; and finally to yourself, who are worth them all every one, *and more than them*, to me at least.—Yours ever, J. B.

### XLIII. To THE SAME

*Monday night. [10th March 1846.]*

MY DEAR JOHN—You would be astonished to get the note of our dearest Maggy's death.<sup>1</sup> I would have written you with it, but she was taken away in such a whirlwind of suffering and in such haste that we were all confounded. As John Johnston in his strong way said, "the *King's* commandment was urgent." She had been ailing slightly all week, but we had no notion of danger till Friday night, and none of immediate death till Saturday night. It was sore throat extending into the windpipe. She had no power of resistance, and made no struggle till the very last, when it was very pitiful to see her sufferings. She died at 10 minutes to 10 yesterday morning. It has been a sore affliction for my father and Isabella and us all. My father insisted on preaching, which he did with great effect and extraordinary composure.<sup>2</sup>

I have in the midst of all this to make a demand you may wonder at and perhaps be angry at. Some days ago I got a letter from Hugh Miller and his partner Fairley in the *Witness*, enclosing £20! and requesting that I would give them a few articles on the Exhibition, and giving as their reason my notice of the Bible. I at first thought that I could not undertake, chiefly from the honest belief (which I still have) that I was unfit for the work. But the £20 in hand *tempted* me, and settled Kitty, who was resolved to keep it. My father and Harvey and David Hill all said I ought, and I did on the condition that Miller would honestly tell me if my introductory was not the thing. I was anxious to do it very much on account of David Hill. I want to tell the truth about him to himself and the public, and also to give some notice of that noble fellow and true Artist, Duncan. Now what I want and must have,—if not for love, for money!

<sup>1</sup> There were three children of his father's second marriage: Jane Ewing, the wife of the Rev. J. Stewart Wilson, D.D., of New Abbey; Professor Crum Brown of Edinburgh University; and the Maggy mentioned here, who died when five years old.

<sup>2</sup> See passage on this in *Letter to John Cairns, D.D.*, p. 41.

## 1846] Letters of Dr. John Brown

—your notes on Duncan. I shall steal so delicately that you alone will know it; only remember, if you wish to use them yourself you must tell me so. If you are going to give them to me, would you send them by *first post*? They were so true and well put that I must have them. I fear I shall make a bungle, but your giving me what I ask will not a little lessen this chance. How are you? Tell me this when you write. . . . Write soon. Kitty sends her love.—Yours ever as ever,  
J. B.

### XLIV. TO THE SAME

Wednesday [18 March 1846].

MY DEAR JOHN—I send you a *Witness*. I was so disgusted with it last night that I begged of the editor to destroy it. This morning when it came to me with its face washed (these proofs madden me entirely) I thought not so ill of it, but still far from well. I have, as you see, pilfered freely from you. I have no continuity and thoroughness of thought, no precision of standard to refer my likings or dislikings to, and my style, if style it can be called, is the piebaldest, oddandendest. Let me hear from you soon.

I mean, if allowed to go on, to set D. O. Hill above Horatio<sup>1</sup> as a Poet or maker, Harvey above him, and Wilkie above them all in pure spiritual fire of genius. I need not say that my *vain bit*, and that is no small bit, will be made quite happy by your putting the notice of poor, glorious, genuine Duncan in the *Advertiser*. I have just been out seeing Maggy and her small pearl, a very fine comely youngling. How beautiful this world is! The Pentlands with their snow, the clear Heaven, the genial sun. I hope you will be soon in, but do not walk in like a madman. Shall I order *Life in the Sick-Room* for you?

J. B.

### XLV. TO COVENTRY DICK

51 ALBANY STREET, Thursday, 17th July 1846.

MY DEAR COVENTRY—By all means do. It is a great and a large and a *new* subject, for after all that has been written about Walter Savage,<sup>2</sup> there has been no *rationale* given of

<sup>1</sup> Horatio M'Culloch.

<sup>2</sup> Walter Savage Landor.



## Letters of Dr. John Brown [1846

his merits and demerits. There was an article in the *Edinburgh* some years ago, but it was a failure. You must get the two double-columned Volumes immediately. He is quite *unique* in everything, so you will not be troubled by running him alongside of half-a-dozen other men, as is the fashion nowadays, it being the way now to describe a man not by what he is in himself, but by what he has in any way resembling any one else. Try your hand at his poetry—Gebir and some of his short pieces, and be sure to read *The Examination of Shakespeare* and the *Conversation between Spenser and Essex*, and his *Pericles and Aspasia*. He is, you know, about 80 years old, a Tory and a Liberal, a man of fortune. If you could get any authentic account of him it would be very interesting, but I do not know how that is to be had. Does Robert know Forster of the *Examiner*? He is very intimate with Landor. But by all means set instantly about the thing; it will suit you and you it.

You are assuredly and without contradictability *BETTER*.  
—Yours ever, J. B.

Catherine's very sorry indeed she didn't see you.

### XLVI. TO THE SAME

CRIEFF, August 12th. The 12th! [1846.]

DEAR COVENTRY—How gets on the *Savage*? and how gets on the Critic of the *Savage*? Is he bettering more and more? Here are we in an old cottage on the Hill on the "Cnoc" of Crieff. This is the first good day since we came, which was on Thursday. The weather has been grim and dreary. Did you ever read a novel by Mrs. Opie, *Adeline*? If so read it again, if not read it twice; it is in its own way quite exquisite.

This is the great slaughter, the St. Bartholomew of the Grouse. Campbell of Monzie, that Freekirkman and purist, has wagered that he slays 230 brace this day, besides wounding and sending miserably into Eternity 3 times as many. Have you heard from Maitland<sup>1</sup> lately? I had a letter from him before I left asking me very urgently out

<sup>1</sup> Edward Francis Maitland, a distinguished member of the Scottish bar, who was elevated to the bench as Lord Barcaple in 1862. He was born in 1803 and died in 1870. See *Dict. Nat. Biog.*

to Broomland, and saying that to induce me to come he would engage that one (or more) of the household would hold themselves bound for having one or more true and professional ailments, so that I might think I was in the way of business as well as delight. He is a fine fellow, deficient in some things altogether, but what is good is *very* good and genuine. His affectionate nature seems very fine.

Kitty and I are agoing off to-morrow to Loch Turrit, a distance of 7 miles, she upon a Scandinavian Powney, and I upon *Mr. Shanks* his gelding. We propose, if we get through the morrow gallantly, to set out to Glen Almond on the same horses. By the bye, if you will not tell I will give you a secret of the dreadfulest. Mr. Robertson of the Head Inn here having been driven to distraction by the myriads of the men of the 12th who came blaspheming and full of gold, and mad to get each to their Moors, and having already 30 horses out and all his Post Boys, obsecrated me most affectingly to be his supernumerary Boy if need was, and I had the scarlet jacket and leathern breeks all ready, but no demand! I was mortified, and how interesting in my spectacles and boots and swearing to the best of my ability! Now remember this is a secret deep as Sir Robert Peel. By the bye, is not he a redemptionless devil that Sir Robert? What a speech that in defence and offence of the Whigs on the Sugar duties! Will any man speak of him as either good or true?

If you are so inclined, write. My regards to the double-columned *Savage*.—Yours ever,  
J. B.

#### XLVII. TO THE SAME

MUNRO'S COTTAGE, CRIEFF, *August 14th* [1846].

MY DEAR COVENTRY—I got your welcome and fat letter yesterday morning as I was in the act of driving Mrs. B. in a gig through Crieff,<sup>1</sup> and I don't know how better to express my sorrow and affection for you than by telling you that it took ten miles of this glorious country with its woods and hills and waters and dappling sunshine and the excitement of a brisk gig to clear away the depression and vexation that came over me when I read the bit about yourself. I am distressed for you and wonder you are so quiet and so contented; *but you will yet get well and strong*, I feel persuaded of this, and you and I may yet be in Glen Ogle *and all that*.

<sup>1</sup> See *Horæ Subsecivæ*, 3rd Series, pp. 391-402.

## Letters of Dr. John Brown [1846

Yesterday Catherine and I set off in the gig as aforesaid. We got to St. Fillans about ten, having passed through the woods of Ochertyre, Lawers, and through Comrie, the habitat of the Earthquakes (there was one last week), then past Dunira. We left our horse to its corn and betook ourselves to the hills, and lay among the heather half-asleep, with the great mountains all lying about us in their magnificent confusion and beauty; terrible fellows these same Grampians, and not to be trifled with. They looked as if they could have *roared* at us, and I daresay they do this in the dark. After a genial chat with the Innkeeper, who is very like Sir Walter Scott, about Grouse and Lord Sefton the Great and his son the present *Yerl*, and the Free Kirk and many other jocosities, we set off up Loch Earn side, "beautiful exceedinglylie," Ben Voirlich the Big looking down on us with a sort of surly smile of grim gratulation (!).

Then to Lochearnhead, where we put up our horse and took a walk for 3 miles up Glen Ogle, a most savagely beautiful pass. I left Mrs. Brown sitting on the banks of the Ogle, with *Duchy* to guard and comfort her, and wandered up among the rocks till I got quite terrified. Fancy myriads of huge rocks, cubical in shape, and many of them as big as

Street house, lying about on the hillside in all ways, and I a miserable Doctor wandering among ~~among, and~~ in perpetual fear of falling into some hole finally and for ever, and thinking I saw them slowly moving down upon me. . . . This Glen Ogle is the most *Heeland* place we have yet seen. We returned, and eat up with profound glee two chuckies and two enormous pancakes. We walked out, and I discovered the Free Kirk Tent and learned from one Dugald Sinclair, a kilted "Free" Heelander with a face as keen as a terrier's, that Dr. Clason and the Gaelic minister had been here. I saw in his hand No. 3 of the *North British*, and to his great delight and at his request I wrote in pencil the names of the Reviewers. He was a worthy and most respectable-looking man.

When in Glen Ogle the Mountains, and especially Ben Voirlich, got that look of intense blue, like the bloom of a blaeberry, and gave us the sort of *eery* feeling that he was much nearer us than many hills on this side of him. Do you know the sort of thing? "a place," as Wordsworth has it, "not uninformed with phantasy and looks that threaten the profane." We then gighed it down the Lochside to Crieff, and came home to our cottage hungry and happy, and

satisfied with seeing and full of sleep as we could hold. This is a very pleasant place, and our cottage is the pleasantest place in it. We are on the very forehead of the hill on which Crieff stands, and have in our eyes a horizon of 60 miles or more, with these great fellows (the Grampians) lying all about in glorious confusion and beauty. I fear I am annoying you with all this expatiation; but you and I *shall* yet have our journey into the Highlands, and possibly we may be in the Smoo cave yet.

As for Libels and Literature and Politics and the Sunderland Election and the Inverness Assembly, what care I? I did like Dr. Chalmers on the Savings Banks, and relished as you truly call it the glorious Bombast of Sir David (do you know, he always suggests to me in his high passages the stickit preacher). Tytler is powerful and *expository* in its severe sense, but I thought it not pleasantly or *unconsciously* written. Somehow they have not the knack of writing genial, gnarled, undefiled English. The *Quarterly* beats us all for that.

But I must end. I leave this on Monday or Tuesday. As to coming to see you at Dunoon, I hope and fear. But you will write me. I do so like to get your letters, with their *passages* of Libels and Puppies, etc. Catherine sends her best regards. She is so sorry you are not strong.—Yours ever affectionately,

JOHN BROWN.

What words they have here, they fill your mouth and are cornery—just like as the mountains do your *een*—Ochertyre, Aberuchill, Ardvorlich, Dunira, Glenartney, Edinample, Abercairney, etc. etc.

#### XLVIII. TO THE SAME

51 ALBANY STREET, *Saty*. [January 1847].

MY DEAR COVENTRY—A Happy New Year to the Sher.-Sub. of Bute—more health, more glee, more sleep, more hunger, more of *articulation* (article making), more of to me epistolary correspondence perfunction. You must, I hope, have thought me a heartless devil, but I have been a half delirious devil with this article making. Then did I send off to Hanna 57 pages, for which I paid 1/10, and I do not know if out of that there can be hewn or clipped anything that can pass. If it is ever born, you will see at the

## Letters of Dr. John Brown [1847

end some ferocious criticism, and just upon my own style. My two cardinal vices are a tendency to preaching and fine writing, and something which in any one else I would call affectation; and for not calling it so, I can give you no reason except that I am not conscious at the time, but this you know is not the test. If it does appear, you will, like an honest friend, tell me what is bad, or at any rate what might be made better, radical defects being hopeless and, like Mr. ——'s nose, best let alone. What are you going to cook for the *Edinburgh*? I am so delighted and self-complacent about this. It was exactly my wish and indeed my expectation. . . .

Fling yourself carelessly in, and fling your flail fluently about, and maul mercilessly. I have not got a Dog for you. Charles the XII. is too much like his namesake, madly valorous.

Now write. I have some choice Edinr. Leeterary Gossip for you, and a few fine malignities of the Sabbatarians and their disgustingest Crew. Kitty sends best wishes. J. B.

### XLIX. TO THE SAME

*Sunday [Feby. 22, 1847].*

MY DEAR COVENTRY—I have just got your goodest-natured of notes. You did not need to write it if you thought I was in any way *hurt*, as the saying is, at your Critique. I don't know that I ever got a letter that gave me more real pleasure than it did. The praise, though I knew it was excessive, was and is and shall continue to be very delectable; the blame was so appropriate, so nicely delivered, so wholesome, so entirely in accordance with my own judgment of myself, that even from it I got more that was sweet than bitter. I like your way of treatment much better than the somewhat equivocal compliment that Dr. Chalmers gave of its being "a glorious article," and then showing very innocently that he had misapprehended very freely the whole scope of it. As to the Imitativeness, I am sure you are right, but how am I to cure it, as it is done unconsciously? But I am sick of this said article; it is a *drug* now. I would have written to you immediately, but, first, I was intimidated by your peremptory command of let no man trouble me till I have polished the *Polity*; 2nd, I have been very much engaged with business. . . .

Harvey's "Manse" is going to be very good *in his way*; the landscape very good, no want of ideality in it. The children and old men also very good; altogether it is full of life and vigour, and not wanting in something higher, a sort of moral beauty and sturdy intellectuality, but I do desiderate more of Raphael in him, more love of the τὸ καλόν for its own sweet sake. He has real imagination, as any one may see by looking at his "Castaway" or his "Muckraker" from the *Pilgrim's Progress*, but he wants musicalness of soul—that something which makes everything be in tune with the rest. As "the Graduate"<sup>1</sup> would say, he has Imagination Penetrative rather than Imagination Associative or Contemplative. Now, he should have them all. The "Enterkin" has more of the highest qualities of a picture than anything he has yet done. It is *exquisite* in its specific sense, as a finished work of art. You should try and run through and see our Exhibition. . . . There are two Turners—one small one quite wonderful, and one large one in his early manner, very beautiful, but unequal and wanting his later enthusiasm and expression of *infinity*, which is to me the most wonderful thing about him. There is a picture of "Oberon and Titania" by young Paton that everybody raves about. It is astonishingly clever, and overflowing with mere fancy. The Academy have bought it for £300.

I would rejoice if Maitland takes the box and the whip of the old *Blue and Yellow*. He has many of the most sterling qualities of an Editor—courage, honesty, liberality, thorough breeding, strong-heartedness, and, I may add, genuine godliness; perhaps he wants vivacity and power of appreciating certain kinds of genius. I don't know, for instance, if he would fully relish the two odes on *Psyché* by our Born Natural, or go into all the queer fancies and deep humours of Charles Lamb. But you must be dead tired of me. Again let me thank you most truly for your two letters. I am, as the Highlandman delicately said of Rob Roy, "a man of incoherent transactions," but I am coherent enough in *valuing you and in missing your face and speech more and more*.—  
Yours ever, J. B.

Write soon; it is really a kindness and an excellent oil to do so.

<sup>1</sup> Ruskin.

## Letters of Dr. John Brown [1847]

### L. TO THE SAME

PARADISE, July 26th [1847].

MY DEAR COVENTRY—Here I am, and where the devil, say you, is Paradise? Write me forthwith and address at “Paradise by Tranent,” and you will get an answer forthwith. It is the house of the Freekirk schoolmaster of Ormiston, which Ormiston is a beautiful and unknown village  $2\frac{1}{2}$  miles from Tranent, lying in the midst of corn and hayfields and woods in the valley of the Tyne. I brought out the children here a fortnight ago for Helen’s benefit. She is very delicate.

I have just come in, 10 o’clock, after lying leaning upon a gate looking at the moon wading through a glorified cloud, before me a dim grass field with the cattle browsing audibly but unseen. What a sight it must be with you. Tell me what you were about at 10 this night.

To-morrow I go home and get into the din and unrest of the town. Macaulay is to be spouting to-morrow. Cowan is to oppose him, but I suppose with little chance unless Duncan prevail on the Voluntaries and all the Ragamuffins to join the Free Kirk and the anti-excisen. However, it will do Master Thos. Babington good, and put him on his peremptors. . . .

I have been reading Lady M. W. Montagu’s *Letters*. They are capital as to manner, and occasionally as to matter, but what a set of adulterers and adulteresses the Lords and Ladies of England were 100 years ago.

I am reading what I am ashamed to say I never read before, though I got it as a prize at the High School some 20 years ago, Burke on the Sublime and Beautiful. It is quite worthy of him and is most delightful reading.

What are you about? Writing any? I have suddenly become very sleepy and idiotic, so Good-night. Write soon and tell me particularly about yourself.—Yours ever,

J. BROWN.

I write with the horriddest of steel pens.

### LI. TO JOHN TAYLOR BROWN

Saturday Evening [April 1849].

MY DEAR JOHN—I was so glad to get your letter. . . . Perhaps you are rather hard on Lord John, but after all I have got

tired of Whigs and Whiggery. It is a *formula*, and though there is good in it, it must go the way of all formulas—to the devil, and we must have a new Birth.

We had a humbug meeting against the Maynooth Grant, in which that “fell wee Deevil” Candlish<sup>1</sup> by his craftiness and intensity got the Voluntaries to sink (and in reality to renounce) their principles and unite in pronouncing damnation on the Papists, and conclude by petitioning Parliament against the Grant, on this ground, that Popery is error and the Pope Antichrist—as if any Voluntary could go to any Parliament *qua* a Protestant and allow to the Parliament the faculty of judging of what is true or false in any religion. The whole system of Sessions and congregations and Presbyteries and meetings petitioning as religious bodies is absurd, unless they allow the correlative that the Civil power has something to say to *them* on religious grounds.

. . . How true what you say about theological drivel! That is a fine thing of Gilfillan’s,—some of it very fine. He has the vision and the faculty divine, and like many others is a gone man by being a minister. He is not a man to go sweetly and meekly in harness, as all our clergy must.

There is to be a tremendous conflict in the Synod—a sort of Armageddon. . . .

What a contrast from this strife of tongues is Turner’s “Palestrina”! I don’t know what else could bring it at this moment into my head and eyes. What a glorious thing it is—a joy for ever! It is the only Landscape I ever saw which satisfies the desire of my mind and gives to this world’s scenery “an ampler æther, a diviner air.” The other daysitting opposite it I forgot it and then found myself wondering what I would see when I got to the end of that chequered avenue, and where that goat beside the steaming river would go next. And so Blessings on that queer old lover of Lucre, J. W. Turner, R.A.

<sup>1</sup> Dr. Brown had a very deep respect for Dr. Candlish, notwithstanding the questionable epithet applied to him in this letter. One Sunday after lunch at Rutland Street, his sister Jane and a friend announced their intention of going to hear Dr. Candlish preach, and begged Dr. Brown to go with them. At first he steadily refused, he “knew far too many people at Free St. George’s; the elders at the plate will shake hands with me.” But his objections were overcome. He was deeply interested in the whole service. The subject of the sermon was Prayer. On his way home Dr. Brown said to his companions, “You were good girls to take me there—it was *splendid*; he first made you feel that you could ask for *anything*, a five-pound note, and then he *dared* you to have any overmastering wish but ‘Thy will be done.’”



## Letters of Dr. John Brown [1849]

Write very soon and tell me how you are sleeping. Kitty sends her love.—Yours and hers ever and ever, J. B.

### LII. To COVENTRY DICK

Wednesday [April 1849].

MY DEAR COVENTRY—You are a good soul for writing so soon and putting me easy, and a good soul for praising me, even though I know that you have been trafficking at the Shop of Friendship, beyond your means. Praise is very pleasant; praise from you is dulcedine dulcius. I by no means give in about Tennyson. I detest as much as you his affectation, his occasional amentia and frequent dementia, but he is a true native poet; if you do not instantly give in I shall send you (at your own expense) a copy of his Poems, and if you don't say that "Ænone," "Love and Death," "The Miller's Daughter," "The Talking Oak," "Dora" are true poems and akin to "Lycidas" and "Comus" and bits of *Paradise Lost*, then am I a Dutchman. . . . I am in a funk this day, having to read at the Harveian Society a notice of John Locke's Medical studies and life. I have got some very curious facts from out-of-the-way places, showing that John was much more of a Doctor all his life than is supposed. . . . There is an article of 50 pages by Croker in the *Quarterly* on Macaulay, full of vigour, malignity, and good writing, and though bad and wrong in the main, he hits home at times. A tumid even a flatulent man is Macaulay and not one of the immortals; he wants the salts of genius and *fine* intellect and pure principle—a sort of Rubens, not a Raphael, a Da Vinci, or Hogarth.

Isabella is better upon the whole, but not well. My father is disgusted and distressed at this sickening Sabbath Question. When shall our sorrows have an end? Our joys I long to see.—Yours ever, J. B.

### LIII. To THE SAME

51 ALBANY STREET, Wednesday [October 1849].

MY DEAR COVENTRY—Has your little hairy absurdity arrived? and what do you think of his rummest of mugs? and that tail! I hope you mean to keep it right, by putting it in a curl-paper every evening. He is the greatest oddity I have seen for many a day. As far as I can judge, he is

## 1849] Letters of Dr. John Brown

a genuine Skye, with a third of his vertebræ omitted, and all the marrow of the omission transferred to his tail, that adunc tail. Cultivate him, study him, sing his praises and his tail in a series of Sonnets.

I was very glad to get your letter, and to hear from my father that you were so well. I hope the leg is better. My father is off to Glasgow to the Alliance. . . . Did I tell you that "Sydenham" is to be in the November No. of the *North British*? Constable besought me for some help and I offered it to him, being too much disgusted with it to mend it for the *Edinburgh*. You will get it and tell me what you think of it. I want you to set *seriously* about your verses. I really am serious. Take up anything, and write as you did in your letter to me. I know quite well that a small volume of that would *pay*. Harvey is well and busy. H—— has £4000 a year and a bad cold. I would rather have my £400 a year and want the cold.

This is as absurd a letter as Wamba's tail. Catherine joins me in kindest regards to your Sister and yourself. Write soon.—Yours ever affly.,  
J. BROWN.

I am not joking a bit about your verses. It would do you immense good to set about it immediately. Make *Wamba* your hero.  
J. B.

## 1850-1859

In 1851 Thackeray paid his first visit to Edinburgh, to read his Lectures on the English Humourists, and Dr. Brown and he met for the first time. In 1854 it was evident that Dr. Brown needed complete change of scene and cessation from work, so in March of that year, accepting the invitation of Mr. and Mrs. James Crum, he left Edinburgh for a tour in Spain. His sister Jane and two other nieces of Mr. Crum's were of the party. In the first edition of *Horæ Subsecivæ* the "Story of Rab and his Friends" is dedicated to "My Two Friends at Busby, Renfrewshire, in remembrance of a journey from Carstairs Junction to Toledo and back." In 1856 Thackeray returned to Edinburgh to deliver his Lectures on The Four Georges, and the acquaintance begun in 1851 ripened into friendship, and they saw much of one another during Thackeray's second visit.

## Letters of Dr. John Brown [1850

On July 27, 1857, Alexander Crum Brown writes to his friend Wilson (afterwards his brother-in-law): "I was at Biggar on Thursday hearing John (my brother) lecture to the Biggar Athenæum. The subject of his lecture was 'The Howgate Carrier, his Wife, and his Dog Rab.' Uncle Smith, in announcing the lecture, had omitted the last word of the title, and so John, at the commencement of his discourse, said that he was sorry he was obliged to begin by a personal attack on Dr. Smith, who had grievously insulted his friend Rab—there was no doubt he was a dog, but he was a great deal more, he was Rab, and he was more emphatically Rab than he was a dog."

In October 1858 Dr. Brown's father died. A few weeks after, the first edition of *Horæ Subsecivæ* was published. In 1859 Mrs. Brown's health gave her husband great anxiety, and in August, following medical advice, he took her to the baths of Schwalbach in Germany. He had for travelling companions Mr. Edward Maitland, at that time Solicitor-General for Scotland, his niece, and Dr. Brown's sister Jane and his brother Alexander.

### LIV. TO JOHN TAYLOR BROWN

[23rd January 1850.]

I have just finished one of my rigmaroles for the *North British*. Dr. Hanna and Constable begged me to give them an article for February. I resisted manfully, but my vanity came to their aid, and after a long and honest siege I capitulated and gave them a queer article on Poetry in general, and Henry Vaughan,<sup>1</sup> "V," "The Bornnatural," and Milton and *Festus* (!) in particular. You would recognise many of my pet doctrines and likings and dislikings. I fall savagely upon *Festus*.

If you have 5/ to spare get Vaughan's Poems from Pickering. The article is too long for this number, and is to go into the May one, if we live to see May.

Sydenham is, I believe, to be in the April *Edinburgh*. Empson misled me about it and it was out of time. He likes it, but it is sadly incomplete. I have no causality (to speak of) in my brain; great Comparison, great Ideality of

<sup>1</sup> See *Horæ Subsecivæ*, 1st Series, pp. 279 ff.

a sort, and a pretty good amount of conscientiousness. This is a phrenological *rationale* of my merits and demerits as a writer and a man. I wish I had an inch or two of your causality and concentrativeness.

I am surprised at what you say about our Saviour Jesus Christ, our God-man, our Fellow. I have never had these difficulties. My religion is really chiefly made up of love to and belief in Him a *person*. My great want is want of practical godliness and purity, but of His existence, and His absolute moral goodness and loveableness I never doubt. All this I explain by my skull (and yet I am no more a phrenologist than ever). I have large veneration—a great appetite, or craving, for a God, large wonder, large Ideality, small causality. I am often terrified at the amount of my belief on the one hand, real belief, and the miserable want of active personal goodness.

Poor Bob,<sup>1</sup> it is sad; indeed one is puzzled and stupefied at thinking on such a life as his, as if God had made him in vain, as if his whole existence was a blunder, and that not of his own making, but the burden and misery of which he has to bear. He is a noble fellow.

What a humbug Miss ——— must be and how vexatious! but you can bear this sort of thing better now than 10 years ago. As one gets on, one's sensitiveness to these sort of things gets kindly blunted, just when they get more frequent. . . . Do write me soon about your health, and about Wordsworth, and about everything. Kitty sends best and biggest love.—Yrs. ever, J. BROWN.

#### LV. To COVENTRY DICK

51 ALBANY STREET, *Tuesday* [Feb. 1850].

MY DEAR COVENTRY—I was so glad to get your letter. It was very pleasant to me, and somehow had a vigour and a cheerfulness about it that made me think the mind and body of its author were in tolerable trim. I never am at rest till I get your opinion about my Opuscles. I know I will get something sincere as well as kind. I agree with you about the quotation system. It is bad, and symptomatic of weakness, but I know not how to change it;

<sup>1</sup> Robert Callander, a fellow-student of Dr. Brown's, who died early of consumption.

## Letters of Dr. John Brown [1850

it is natural to me now, but I shall strive steadily against it. In moderation it is good, as often what you mean to say has been said in a better, and in the very best, way before you. Wamba I was sure would be a joy for ever, except in the matter of his bowels. We have an infant dog at present called Puck, and it is dreadful the distraction we are kept in between the deepest affection and disgust at the little devil. . . .

Have you got *Shirley* yet? It is a singular book; let me know your opinion of it. I read very little; nothing interests me somehow. There are some things as good as reading, sometimes better, and we will be going some day soon where there are probably no books.

How is your health? There is a wonderful picture here of Delaroche's, "Bonaparte before Abdicating"; it is really a bit of real genius. Jeffrey and his wife are exceedingly well. Empson is better. . . . I heard from him very lately. John Cairns has just been in at tea; he is a capital, sound-headed fellow. . . .

### LVI. TO JOHN R. FINDLAY

BRIDGE OF ALLAN, 24th February [1850].

MY DEAR SIR—Your welcome note reached me here yesterday. I left Edinburgh on Thursday, driven out of it by my Doctor in search of sleep, which I found in great abundance here and have been revelling in it ever since. The paper on Scott is by Lady Trevelyan, as well as the verses, and it deserves all you say of it. Mrs. Brown meant you to send the proof of *it* to Lady Trevelyan at 17 Melville Street. I shall be home at the farthest on Thursday and shall see you soon afterwards.

Poor Sir William Allan is dead—another of our bright and familiar lights gone out—another of our best and ablest and most loveable men has "joined the famous nations of the dead." Did you know him? He was a rare bit of true spirit and humour, gentleness, fortitude, and generosity. Up to the last he was at work, with all his fire and industry, at his picture of "Bannockburn." The second last time I saw him I came upon him before he saw me; it was a scene Wilkie might have put all his powers into. The little rugged, wasted old man was lying on two chairs near the fire (like a shipwrecked but undaunted sailor), his shepherd's plaid round

## 1850] Letters of Dr. John Brown

him, his bonnet on his brow, and his legs covered with some of his Circassian and Moorish gear; he was lying there, gazing keenly all over his immense canvass, enjoying what he had done and kindling up at what he saw he could yet do. You have no idea how picturesque the whole scene was. If you have any notice of him in Wednesday's paper, you should get the *Art Union Journal* about a year and a half ago, and you will find a most interesting life of him, written (the early part of it) chiefly by himself.

I am rapidly recruiting here, but don't feel myself, not having seen the *Scotsman* since Wednesday. By the bye, I am some of these days going to beg to be presented with an orra copy of the dear old man, in consideration of offices which I mean to perform for his service.—Yours ever truly,  
J. BROWN.

Best regards to your Uncle and Russel.

### LVII. TO COVENTRY DICK

51 ALBANY STREET, *March 6th* [1850].

MY DEAR COVENTRY—It is needless for me to say anything in mitigation. It is odd and distressing to myself, how I can keep from writing you, for very few days pass in which you are not in my mind, and in my heart too, as one of the few whom I value most, and yet my affection goes no farther than expressing itself to itself instead of to you. Many a time do I think of the Sabbath evenings we had in King Street, and many a time do I think of all you have suffered and been deprived of since that, and yet I go on from day to day and never send you a word of affection or cheer.

This has been an odd sort of winter to me. I have been in indifferent health, my mind very irritable, many things happening to please me, some to perplex and distress me. In my profession I was making great progress, getting, I daresay, inflated with silly pride, and the end of it all has been an illness of more than a month, sleeplessness, headache, biliosity, rheumatism, and a sort of shabby Scotch gout, all running riot in my poor corpus. I am now, however, out of the tempest, feeble but well, and one of my first acts is this same writing to my old and dear friend. I am ashamed of having said so much about myself after what I know you are habitually suffering, but you will excuse this. How are you? Let me have a short history of your state, and let me have

## Letters of Dr. John Brown [1850

some notion of how you pass your days, what you do, what you read, what you think, and how you sleep. Would you not be the better of coming here for a month? . . . Are you able for much mental work? Could you indite a pamphlet on this dreary Education affair about which everybody is bungling? I wish you would if you are able; it would sell, and might, indeed would, do good. . . .

Jeffrey's death would affect you a good deal; me it did a great deal—foolishly. I was under a sort of spell when I met that bright old man. Empson sent for me after his funeral, and for two hours poured out his affectionate and promiscuous soul about his friend and father-in-law. He is an odd womanish sort of creature Empson, with manly bits here and there. . . .

I have been reading slowly *Don Quixote*; let me beg of you to do the same. I do not know that I ever enjoyed anything more. The madness of the Don is nearer nature than anything in literature, not excepting Shakespeare, and Sancho is unspeakable. Do read it and write me 4 Sonnets upon it. Harvey has painted a picture, the "Bowlers," for London, and has sold it for £400. Edward Maitland is rising fast and surely, and so he may. But I must stop; let me have a letter soon, and remember never to forget that in spite of my silence I am as of old, yours, J. BROWN.

Mrs. B. joins in best regards to your sister and in obeisance to the omniscient

W A M B A.

Do you know this play upon the Tenses by Grotius? *Praesens* imperfectum perfectum: plusquam perfectum *Futurum*.

Did I tell you how delighted I was with Petronius Arbiter? Try and get a copy and read him. He is full of genius and *muck*, but the genius is of the best.

Zephyrique TACENTIA ponunt  
Ante meos sua flabra pedes.

*Tacentia* is very fine.

Emicuere rosæ, violæque, et molle cyperon,  
Albaque de viridi RISERUNT lilia prato.

These are some bits from him; but his wit and nicety of expression, and his startling bursts of seriousness and infinite despair, are very striking.

LVIII. To JOHN R. FINDLAY

51 ALBANY STREET, *Thursday, 7th March 1850.*

MY DEAR SIR—My best thanks for your kind and welcome letter, which was not long enough for my greedy convalescential appetite. It was exactly the sort of thing I was wishing to get.

Many thanks also for your valuable gift of the *Scotsman*. I am ashamed of my shamelessness in asking for it. But I have never been rich enough to buy the *Scotsman*, though I have always read it; long before you were born I was sucking in from its little *double sheets* the pure old Whiggery, its sincere milk, and I have a filial love for everything about *her*, *Scotsman* though she be. . . .

I am now greatly better, and hope to see you soon.

Happy Thalaba<sup>1</sup> is fishing at Cowdenknowes. I hear he is constructing an article for the *Edinburgh*. Why do you never write verses now?

Do you remember Cowper's lines on "Yardley Oak"? I read it the other day. Look at it.

Mrs. Brown begs to join her thanks with mine for the present of yourself.<sup>2</sup> She always grudged its leaving the house, as she, like a sensible woman, liked to take her time. I send you Lord Jeffrey's letter to Mrs. Sydney Smith. Read it, and if you can, insert it to-morrow with the heading Lord Jeffrey's last Letter.

It is so like him, and shows how entire he was to the end, how full of honest industry, candour, and that quick, rich, affluent intellect and affection which we will never again see matched. It is a beautiful closing to the long, busy, brilliant, useful, and happy day of that divine old man—

Whom never more shall we forget, or see.

But I am getting newspaperish. I may some day, when you have room and I have time, give you a notice of Sydney Smith's *Sketches*. They are capital, witty of course, acute, eloquent, and shrewd, and often strikingly *serious*, Common-sense rampant throughout. They are a good antidote to the transcendentalism and *Nebular* theories so much in vogue.—  
Yours ever, J. B.

<sup>1</sup> The late Alexander Russel, Editor of the *Scotsman*, called Thalaba (after Southey's "Thalaba the Destroyer") in allusion to Russel's fiery attacks in the *Scotsman* on his political opponents.

<sup>2</sup> The *Scotsman*.



# Letters of Dr. John Brown [1850]

## LIX. TO JOHN TAYLOR BROWN

51 ALBANY STREET, EDINBURGH [May 1850].

MY DEAR JOHN—You cannot think worse or so ill of me as I do of myself. I often look upon myself as one sarcoma of selfishness and indolence, not worth even my own caring for. I got the money all safe, and ought of course to have acknowledged it. Andw. M'Kay took the Arundel Subscription and said he would send you a receipt. . . .

We are going on as usual, my practice increasing, but not with alarming swiftness, my health much better, my position improving. Sydenham and Locke have given me a lift more than I or they (I mean the papers) deserve. But so it always is; this world goes on per saltum in these matters. The reason it was not in the *Edinburgh* was that Empson sent it back wishing some changes, very slight, but my indolence and pride refused. Then Constable asked me as a desperate favour to give him, along with James Moncreiff and a few others, a *gratis* paper. I furbished up Sydenham, and added or rather prefixed the bit on John Locke, and glad to get quit of it I sent it him. It has been much more liked than I expected. You will see how deficient in all solid qualities it is, but there are some things hinted at which I had long desired to say. Don't laugh at me for all this gloriation. Principal Lee mentioned it in his Introductory Lecture and recommended it to the Students. Empson and Rogers wrote about it, and best of all Sir William Hamilton and some of the best London Doctors. *Sed jam satis hujusculi.*

Tell me what you think of it. I know you will give me both an honest and a kind word. . . .

You have no conception what a poor harumscarum brain it is, and how little it is worth in all that makes a man. I say this in real earnest to you. I never said it to any one else.

John Cairns is going from strength to strength, deeper and richer.

Now write me soon, saying you forgive me once more, and will give me another chance.

Kitty joins in best affection to you, my own beloved friend.

J. B.

## LX. To COVENTRY DICK

23 RUTLAND STREET, 13 June 1850.

MY DEAR COVENTRY—Here we are sitting in the midst of confusion. We left Albany Street this morning. I always feel queer and dull on leaving any place where I have been for some time, and in this case I feel it the more that in the house I have left our dear little girl left us. I am so glad to hear that you are better, that you are able to walk much better. This is very encouraging. In addition to our discomforts, we have lost our dog, Puck, a fellow of infinite humour and affection and the very doggest of dogs. We have proclaimed our sorrows in an emphatic Bill, in which the word P U C K plays a great part. But seriously it is no joke losing a dog. I hope yours is still yours, and that it is waxing funnier and unaccountabler and transcendentaller than ever.

My father has finished his new book.<sup>1</sup> I have read it all, and though there is a great mass of excellent matter, a great deal of true exposition, and occasional passages of manly eloquence, I fear that it is heavy, like dough that is not well risen. But this may not appear to others. The style as a style is not good. Have you read Southey's 4 Vols. of *Life*? What an impudent, pervicacious fellow he was, and yet honest and warm-hearted and full of ideas, and what a style! Have you got a sight of Tennyson's *In Memoriam*? I think you would like it much more than otherwise; some of it is really exquisite. Let me hear what you think of it. I am doing nothing but drudging away at my work. I am going to eschew all philandering with the Belles Lettres.

I saw a capital article by your brother Robert lately on Homœopathy. Did I tell you that I have great hopes of getting from Lord Lovelace John Locke's unpublished Diaries, when a medical student? When you can, you may be sure I will be glad to hear from or of you. Mrs. Brown sends her best regards to yourself and Miss Catherine, as does also yours ever very much,

J. BROWN.

<sup>1</sup> Probably *An Exposition of our Lord's Intercessory Prayer* (Edin. 1850). On the point of style, Professor Crum Brown writes: "Not long before my father's death, he asked me to read to him one of his printed sermons, bidding me stop when I came to anything I thought could be better expressed, adding, 'I know my style is not elegant; your brother John has a perfect style.'"

## Letters of Dr. John Brown [1850

Did I tell you that Empson asked me to go out to Craigcrook and choose a couple of Books from Jeffrey's Library. I got his favourite copy of *Paradise Lost* with his name and 1801 on it, and his College Greek Testament.

Lord Cockburn is engaged to write his Life and edit his letters. Most people laugh at this, but if Cockburn do anything to it, it will be good or at least *natural*, which is a rare thing.—Yours ever and hers too thy sister, J. BROWN.

### LXI. TO THE SAME

23 RUTLAND STREET, July 8th [1850].

MY DEAR COVENTRY—Your defiance came duly to hand and was accepted to the extent of sundry pages of powerful (?) writing, in which reason, wit, fancy, humour, and all the talents were copiously displayed. But on looking over the result, I burnt it, it being extravagant and altogether bad. And now I have no furor to set me agoing, and would almost from sheer inertia give in. I still, however, think I am *righter* and you *wronger*; perhaps I am right as 5 to 2, and you right as 2 to 5! this way of settling a critical dispute having the advantage of brevity. But, in fine, get you *In Memoriam* and read it and then report. "Confusions of a wasted youth" refer, I should think, to the poems that follow, and the feelings and history that they depict and chronicle. But get the Book and get his other poems and read "Cenone" and the "Gardener's Daughter."

Jeffrey, who was not given to like over-fanciful and unreasonable and fantastic poets, liked Tennyson very much in spite of his faults and wants. . . . Harvey has painted a portrait of Professor Wilson; it is excellent. Dunlop (the Advocate) is going to sit to him for his portrait. Harvey often asks about you; he also is a true man. Write soon. Love to your sister and self and W A M B A. J. B.

### LXII. TO THE REV. DR. JOHN CAIRNS<sup>1</sup>

SOUTH QUEENSFERRY, 26th September 1850.

MY DEAR SIR—You must not be angry at my writing you about your health. From Aunt Balmer's and other accounts, I have got it into my head that you are not in a good way.

<sup>1</sup> Published in the Life of Dr. Cairns by A. R. MacEwen.

## 1850] Letters of Dr. John Brown

that you have overworked that big and hardy brain of yours, and that if you do not call a halt you may get into general bad health, or into some specific and serious ailment. I write you, therefore, on my own selfish account, because a great deal of my comfort, and much of my spiritual life, depends upon you. If you are sleeping ill, your memory incompetent, your mind sluggish, irregular, indifferent, you should at once give mind and body a rest and a rejoicing, and leave Berwick for a month. I am not joking. It is no trifle when a Titan like you gets amiss. Those who are worst to set wrong are also worst to set right. One thing you can amend immediately, and that is your late hours, and your taking so little sleep. You should have 8 hours in your bed out of every 24. If you speak to George Wilson,<sup>1</sup> who I hope is with you, he will agree with me. We are all here. The children have been for nearly two months, Kitty for more than one, and I as often as I could. We were in Aberdeen and up Dee to the Linn and enjoyed ourselves greatly.

Kitty joins me in kindest regards. She is quite as urgent on the health question as I am.—Yours ever affectly.,  
JOHN BROWN.

### LXIII. To JOHN R. FINDLAY

23 RUTLAND STREET, *Wednesday* [18th Decr. 1850].

MY DEAR SIR—My (or to speak in the dual sense) *Our* biggest and best thanks for your review of *Pen*; it is worthy of the Book, which involves no end of the best praise. Your own remarks, and T. Campbell's bit about Burns, go to the quick of the matter; to make use of a perhaps too sacred illustration, Thackeray is quick and powerful, he pierces to the dividing asunder of the joints and marrow, and is a *discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart*; once there, he looks out and knows all things. I wish you had saved Helen from utter softness, as if she had a weak, or no *spine*, by referring to the true moral courage shown by her in the matter of her *first love*. This should never be forgotten, and the relation Laura (the spiritual one) bears to her in this way is wonderfully subtle and fine. But you will think I am going to write an article upon yours. I write chiefly to get

<sup>1</sup> Professor of Technology in the University of Edinburgh. There is a paper on him in *Horæ Subsecivæ*, 2nd Series, p. 153.

## Letters of Dr. John Brown [1850]

quit of our thanks, and to ask you to send a copy of the *Scotsman* to Thackeray at Kensington. He needs and relishes this sort of rational praise. I wish in next number you would give us a paper on his style, both in *itself* and as the medium of his mind.—Yours ever truly, J. BROWN.

### LXIV. To COVENTRY DICK

23 RUTLAND STREET, *Sunday Morning* [Decr. 1850].

MY DEAR COVENTRY—Yours, and the mutilated and disjected members of poor Tennyson, came safe to hand. I was vex'd with both, you would wonder how much; it quite filled my mind all yesterday, and puzzled me not a little. Probably the best way, where tastes so entirely differ, is to leave the matter to time. I did not greatly admire the bit you sent, but I did not dislike it in the way and to the degree you do. I am not a Tennysonian, as many are. I like him now, in spite of my old dislike, and in spite of his many and great faults; but I have got more pleasure, and more thought, and in a certain sense more good, from this little volume than from any other book or thing for a long time. So you may understand my disappointment in getting your anatomical preparation yesterday,—not, as I have already said, because of the bit itself, but because it made me hopeless of your ever doing justice to the body of the book, the critic in you having taken the upper hand of the poet in you, the reverse, I think, being the normal way of going to work. First read the book receptively and *quâ poeta* and in a measure passively, giving yourself up to the writer, trying to go with him and in his spirit; then having got an unbroken impression, set about judging and bringing him up to you, and treat him accordingly. But enough of this; you are entirely wrong in thinking that I have nursed myself into a fit of admiration, and that I must return to my natural state. I wish I could prophesy with any measure of faith your getting out of your delusion, but I know you of old as an obdurate and much dilected man.—Yours ever affectionately, J. BROWN.

The poem you send is plainly an address to the second person of the Trinity; the orbs of light and shade are the heavenly bodies either in or out of the sun.

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LXV. To GEORGE HARVEY

23 RUTLAND STREET, *Friday* [1851].

MY DEAR HARVEY—Thanks for your unfailing ticket,<sup>1</sup> a memorial to me of one of the best things I have met with—your friendship. Wilson<sup>2</sup> is very greatly admired, and has taken its place as *the* picture; only do bring back the *ruddy*, healthy colour. The other two pictures keep their ground nobly.

As for the Two Turners<sup>3</sup> I cannot speak of them. That tremendous sea is sounding in my ears, “multitudes of waters,” “deep calling unto deep” “at the noise of *his* waterspouts, all their billows going over them,” and that boat sail in the bield of the reeling transport, and the looks and screams and eyes of terror that you find everywhere in the midst of the destruction,—what a picture! It has set my mind a-tossing and tumbling and swelling, as that same sea. And that bit of the steadfast green earth, “The Vintage,” and that placid water! such a contrast in everything, and yet how like nature and himself. Probably this is even the finer picture, but at present I am delivered over to that tempest of the sea and air.—Yrs. ever Tempestuously but affectionately, J. B.

LXVI. To LADY TREVELYAN

23 RUTLAND STREET, *23rd June* 1851.

MY DEAR LADY TREVELYAN—We are not so bad as we seem, neither are we so good as we would like Lady Trevelyan to think us, but we have not yet attained that pitch of “depravity” involved in our forgetting or neglecting to take home and deal kindly by “A Study from Nature, by P. J. Trevelyan”; no, I have not been so left to myself or to that personage more remarkable for his talents than his virtues, as that would amount to. My real reason for not writing is such a magnanimous one that you would not give me credit for it. I therefore keep it to myself. But, seriously, I have been by one way or other hearing very often of you. I was very

<sup>1</sup> To the Annual Exhibition of the Royal Scottish Academy.

<sup>2</sup> Christopher North, author of *Noctes Ambrosianæ*.

<sup>3</sup> “The Wreck of the Minotaur” and “The Vintage of Mâcon.”

## Letters of Dr. John Brown [1851

anxious indeed about you—you looked so feeble and so sad, when I last saw you at your door before setting off. And the sight of your writing, and your cheerful words, have made me very happy. Do take care of yourself, and keep out of the reach of anything like a Doctor. I heard that Sir Walter was in London. I am tired of this eternal glorification of the Exhibition, and am longing for a little of “the luxury of disrespect.” I have some hopes that I may myself be the unique mortal who will go into, and round, and through, and out of that astonishing spectacle, with some measure of Contempt and disdain. “Poor creature,” you will say, “so much the worse for you.” But I heard Jenny Lind and cared nothing for her, I detest Mrs. Browning and *Festus*, and prefer Thackeray 10 times over to Dickens, and therefore I have some hopes, in this other universal point, of differing from everybody else. I am glad John Ruskin is coming back to his first and best love. I read *The Stones* carefully last week; it is a great work—in some respects his greatest—but his arrogance is more offensive than ever, and his savage jokes more savage than ever, and than is seemly or edifying, and his nonsense (and his father’s) about Catholic Emancipation most abundantly ridiculous and tiresome. I once thought him very nearly a god; I find we must cross the River before we get at our gods. He is surely wrong, or at least not right, about the Cockney Peruginos. By the way, I saw a picture by Etty last week, the “Fleur de Lis,” for which a friend of mine had paid the week before £1000, and most astonishing of all, for which bit of insanity his wife, a canny Scotswoman and the mother of a large family, applauded him out and out. Poor old, miserable, magnificent Turner, it is most lamentable and mysterious that such a gifted and mighty creature should be such a wicked fool. Do you often think of this—how seldom genius serves God, and how often the Devil? It is to me an amazing mystery. Since you are not drawing from nature as you used to do, I wish you would paint some *word pictures*, some studies from Nature as you take your drives. But I must stop, for this is literally my last bit of paper—scraps the two last. I need not say how glad I will be and have been to hear from you. My wife is in the country for a few days. If possible I will try and come up and see you this Autumn, but I am bitterly intent on making money, and coaxing old ladies to “employ” me. Have you read *Wuthering Heights*—carefully? I did so last week, and think it a work of the highest genius. If it had been in the

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form of a Tragedy, it would have been the noblest bit of intensity and passion and human nature, in the rough and wild, since Shakespeare—it is far above *Jane Eyre*. I have not seen Dyce. You know I am a vile grovelling “Voluntary” in religion, in Education, in everything; and therefore you must (in that respect) detest and abhor me, and desire my immediate extinction. I say this to prepare you for my disliking the very things in Dyce that you like. What a harum-scarum letter this is! It is a signal proof of my friendship, my sending it to you! My best regards to Sir Walter. I would like to have a note from *him* saying how *he* thinks you are. Best regards to Miss Lofft.—Yours ever truly,

J. BROWN.

I have not seen the Large Plates of *The Stones of Venice*—I don't believe there is a copy in Edinburgh.

## LXVII. To COVENTRY DICK

23 RUTLAND STREET, *Sunday Evening [July 1851].*

MY DEAR COVENTRY—Have you read a novel called *King's Cope*? It is two or three years old. If you have not, try and get it, and if you have, tell me how you liked it. I have been quite overcome by it in that old way which is now so infrequent and so pleasant; it fairly beguiled me. I often think you might amuse yourself and others by writing a novel,—one of your own devising; you might play with it and take your time, and could get out many things and thoughts that are in you. I am not joking.

Are you sick of Lord John yet? Are you sick of all public men? I am, except of Earl Granville, and Anastasius Hope, and Lord Palmerston. Who are your present pets? Did I ask you if you had read the *Life of the Bishop of Norwich*?<sup>1</sup> And did I tell you Kitty and I, instead of going up to Loding, are going to lose ourselves in the Moor of Rannoch? And are you progressing in Tennyson? And have you read the 4th Book of *Paradise Lost* lately? And why are you writing me never and devil a word? And how is Wamba and how his tail? Our friend Puck is in the country; we did not like to hurt his muzzle and his feelings by putting on the Municipal muzzle.—Yours ever, J. B.

<sup>1</sup> Bishop Stanley.



# Letters of Dr. John Brown [1851]

## LXVIII. TO JOHN TAYLOR BROWN

DALMENY, Monday, 16th Sept. [1851].

MY DEAR JOHN—Your paper, with your handwriting, has pricked my heart. I am glad you sent it, but for this same pricking and for that paper on education—*rem tetigisti acu*—you have hit the nail on the head. What is it that we should desire to bring out of, and put into, the mind of the lower classes of Englishmen? This question of National Education seems to me to be getting more confused than ever. Perhaps it is the preparatory mixture and fine confusion that promises fermentation and a pure liquor, which every man will accept as the true thing. What are your real views on this matter, and how far do you think any Government can go with effect?

I have been in Glencoe since I saw you, and Kitty with me. We had a famous round of it. She had first a fortnight at Rannoch in a Chieftain's house,<sup>1</sup> then I joined her there for three days, and with £40 in hand we started for Kenmore, Killin, Loch Awe, then back to Tyndrum, where we took the coach to Fort William through the Marquis' Deer Solitude and Glencoe. It was a glorious day, and we were outside a capital four-horse coach, and it was most delightful. The Black Mount and the Shepherds of Etive and the glorious Glencoe! I only wished we two could have slept in it, as you did, and heard the Spirits muttering at the back of the hills. From Fort William we sailed up the Caledonian Canal to Inverness, and from that into Ross-shire, purposing to get to Skye, but that was not to be. We were three days in a wild valley in Ross-shire, near Loch Monar. We then returned home by the Perth road, staying at Aviemore two days, and going to the top of Cairngorm in a day of terrific wind. We crept to the top of the precipice that overhangs Loch A'an and looked down into its green and wizard depths. What an unspeakable place that is! . . . We then came home, and have been ever since incessantly chattering about our tour. We preferred doing this to going to the Exhibition, and we do not regret our choice.

We are all well—my Kitty is plump and brisk and the children quite well. Write me soon. Kitty sends her love.  
—Yours ever,

J. BROWN.

I had a very pleasant meeting at Lord Dunfermline's with old Hallam, a quiet, good man.

<sup>1</sup> Dall; Struan Robertson's house. See notice of him in *Horæ Subsecivæ*, 3rd Series, p. 383.

## LXIX. TO LADY TREVELYAN

23 RUTLAND STREET, 29th Oct. [1851].

MY DEAR LADY TREVELYAN—Many thanks for that kind, pleasant, and mindful letter of yours, notwithstanding of that Satanic sting, in its tail, about the Doctors, of whom you seem to think, what St. Paul said of the Cretans, and King David (in his haste) of all men. I hope, however, that the despised Doctors are right for this once, and that her Ladyship is really and thoroughly well, and moreover that she means to be here this winter and to make up for that hideous last one. All here moves on its ancient way—the classes begin next week, the Provost is elected, Hallow Fair happens, rents are paid (or not), servants spend all their wages on Sunday clothes and the Pious Sustentation Fund, the Concerts, of which I hope you have heard, begin, Thackeray comes, and writes his novel, and lectures, and dinés, and is delicious. I write a review of Bishop Stanley's Life, in which I unfold a new Doctrine for the regeneration of mankind, in which the Theatre, Music, Dancing and the Fine Arts, Good Eating and Drinking, and general jocosity are and have to be part and parcel of the Christian Scheme. You are to write a novel, an article on Art, and illustrate a new Edition of *Pre-Raphaelitism*; and Dr. Simpson is to give a course of Lectures on the Apocalypse. So you see we are to have a jovial winter.

We enjoyed our Highland tour very much. I sent Kitty up to Rannoch a fortnight before me, to invigorate her. I joined her there, and had three days' delightful prowling about—Big Schiehallion haunting us for ever, looking at midnight in at our bedroom window, and scowling and laughing at us when we were deep in the grouse pie at breakfast. Were you ever in Rannoch? One great beauty of it is that its roads all end nowhere, the moor of Rannoch having never yet been explored, even by an exciseman. Then from Rannoch to Taymouth, then to Killin, spending a Sunday on the hills up the Lochy, then Tyndrum and Dalmally and Loch Awe, then back to Tyndrum, and on the top of a capital four-horse Coach through the Black Mount Forest, past the Shepherds of Etive, and down Glencoe in a glorious sunset, with the hills of Morven bathed in heaven, and the gloom of night pouring into the Corries. There was something quite unforgettable in this ride; the spice of danger made it all the

## Letters of Dr. John Brown [1851

more keenly relished, it being something to drive down such a Dantesque place as Glencoe at the rate of ten miles an hour, with Eternity alongside of you all the way—for had anything gone wrong with our coach we must have landed there. Do you know the Shepherds of Etive? If not, you and Sir Walter must, before you leave this world, go and take three days at Kingshouse and study these shepherds, and go down Glen Etive. Then we drove along Loch Leven to Fort William, and from that sailed up the Caledonian Canal to Inverness, having that idiotic encourager of Art, Lord Ward, as our fellow-passenger to Invergarry. From Inverness we went through Lord Lovat's Forest and past Eilan Aigas and the Dhrum to Loch Monar, where we stayed for three days with the laird of Monar. Very happy days they were. We had intended going on to Skye, but I had to content myself with a view, far off, of the Coolin Hills against a clear orange sky. Then back to Inverness, and from that to Aviemore, and up to the top of Cairngorm on a day of frantic wind, such as William Davidson, the guide, had never encountered—Kitty behaving like a Trojan and a Brick. Then home by Perth. I left Kitty at Rannoch for a week, where she had the fun of the Tilt Meeting. I fully intended being at the close of the Exhibition, but Dr. Scott fell ill and I could not go. I regret this, although I am Cynic enough to believe that, though delighted and astounded with the idea of the whole and with my ideas of it (!), I would have been annoyed and enraged at many offences. Nevertheless, it is the great event not only of the year but of the time.

I have wearied you with my nonsense, and must stop. I like *Pre-Raphaelitism* all but its title, which is ugly, absurd, and unkind. I need not say how glad I shall be to hear from you. By the bye, I have been importuned by the gentle Findlay of the *Scotsman* to review *Pre-Raphaelitism*. I cannot do this. Will you? giving a short account of your own estimate of the Brethren. Do, do this. Kitty unites with me in best regards to yourself and Sir Walter.—Yours ever truly,  
J. BROWN.

### LXX. TO THE SAME

23 RUTLAND STREET, 16th Novr. [1851].

MY DEAR LADY TREVELYAN—Your letter was a great pleasure, and all the more so from its having nothing in it—reserving to myself the interpretation of “nothing.” It was

very good of you to think of doing it, and still better and *gooder* to do it. I shall now answer your queries. My leg is now all right, and I never remember being in better health, or having more of that pleasure in mere existence which is one of God's best blessings. It was not Brodie, but a very different, indeed entirely a reverse man, —, who gave the Lectures on Sculpture. I did not hear them. He is a clever, self-sufficient, easily pleased (with himself), overwhelming sort of man, of whom I have some horror. He is himself, as he makes all his men, women, and children, intensely muscular, and seems to have *all* his muscles in violent action at all times. An uncomfortable man, you will say, but with some small particle of Divine fire. Do you know that I was asked by the Philosophical people to deliver a course of Lectures on the British Art of the past 50 years? I declined, like a man of sense and discretion. . . . You will enjoy the Brewsters. I envy you cantering about your moorlands on your pony in these crisp, frosty days with ruddy sunrises and sets. I heard that *The Stones of Venice* are to go on to twelve numbers, which at two guineas each will be ruinous, besides keeping us out of that third Volume.

. . . I would have thought John Ruskin too much a man of genius to be always good-humoured. Shakespeare, I am sure, was dangerous when he was writing *King Lear* and his bit of *The Spanish Tragedy*. Is the Gainsborough your own; and whose portrait is it? I admire more and more his two portraits here.

What a charming book the *Life of Constable* is! You know it. We were so delighted with it—there is so much of the best affection and sense in him, and his love story is as fine as Crabbe's. . . . Good, readable books were never so scarce; bad, stupid, impossible books never so plentiful. Among the first is *The Initials*; if you have not read it, you will like it. The character of the strange, fine-natured girl is to my eye exquisite. It is written by A. Z. herself. Mrs. Combe knows her.

Amongst the worst of the bad is *Olive*, by Miss Mulock—or Miss Moloch, as she is pleasantly called—and *Alton Locke*, a book which is my especial horror, as being one of the "tremendous" school of literature, everything at highest pitch—words, sentiments, politics, religion, character (if it deserves the name), conversation, all bursting most uncomfortably from excess of meaning (or its intention) and fury. And to think that *Alton Locke* is written by the author of

## Letters of Dr. John Brown [1851

*The Saint's Tragedy*, and a member of the Church of England! This bit of fury of mine, at other people's fury and folly, brings something the opposite of both into my mind—Miss Block's singing. Have you heard of her from her Cousins? Such a voice for pureness, firmness, sweetness, and power—and a certain speakingness—I have not for long, if ever, heard. You don't think of the voice but as a perfect medium, an exactest instrument, for telling and fulfilling the inward mind. You would be delighted with herself as well as her voice. She and her mother sing a song of Burns by Mendelssohn—"Oh wert thou in the Cauld Blast, I'd shelter thee, I'd shelter thee," and she has a simple English air, "When thou art near me," which is as fine as anything in Tennyson, as pure and deep. Isabella Graham is singing all the better of having such a rival, and La Petite Quartette is getting on bravely.

But what a letter I am inflicting on you. . . .

Dr. Simpson is well, and as overwhelmed with work as ever, and plunging about rejoicing in it, like any seal in the Bay of Baffin.

I hope you continue well and strong. You are too hard upon the High Sheriff, who, I have no doubt, is making everything very nice and perfite. Mrs. Brown joins me in best regards to yourself and him. We shall be very happy to have another letter about such "nothings" as the last's.—  
Yours ever truly, J. BROWN.

### LXXI. To JAMES CRUM

23 RUTLAND STREET, 26th Nov. [1851].

MY DEAR JAMES—Thackeray may well be grateful to his unknown friend. There has been nothing further from him to-day. I mentioned to Wood what you say about an afternoon lecture, and he said that no afternoon entertainment had ever paid in Glasgow except Jenny Lind's Concert. He seemed to think that *TWO* afternoon lectures might do. I will write to Thackeray about this. I know nothing whatever of him personally, having never set eyes on him, but I am much mistaken if he would not enjoy himself very truly with you two at Busby. He is a student of human nature, and he would find both humanity and nature there, which is saying more than can be said of some of the great folks. But of his ways and his likings we can say nothing till we

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see him. It is most provoking his mismanagement in not writing sooner.

I have had a sad disappointment about the High School. I had been working with all my might for three weeks for my old friend John Millar,<sup>1</sup> and we lost it by one, one of our men being laid up in bed. We had the Provost on our side. If Thackeray does not go to Glasgow, you must come through and see him. Have you got the new Dam finished? . . .

I will write you again if there are any news. I have set Russel to blow a blast for Thackeray in Saturday's *Scotsman*.

Kitty sends her best regards; she is so pleased at the interest you are taking in our "Lion."—Yrs. ever,

J. BROWN.

LXXII. TO THE SAME

23 RUTLAND STREET, *Wednesday* [10 Dec. 1851].

MY DEAR JAMES—The great man has come, and is a great *man*, as well as *writer*. He is, in fact, greater as a man than as a writer, and he is big as well as great, six feet two and built largely, with a big, happy, shrewd head, and as natural in all his ways as you yourself, or the Black Prince up the way.

But to business. He has been so surprised and pleased at his success last night that he longs to harry Glasgow of £100, and if sure of succeeding would give two or four forenoon Lectures. Wood is indifferent somehow, and throws cold water on it. Can you find out what is likely to be true about it? I know you would both like him, and you might take him out to Busby, and make him as happy as he would you. We had him at dinner yesterday all by himself. If he does not go to Glasgow, try and come through for a night next week. My father's leg is better—he is altogether much better. Best regards from us both.—Yrs. ever,

J. BROWN.

LXXIII. TO LADY TREVELYAN

*Sunday Evening* [Spring 1852].

MY DEAR LADY TREVELYAN—How delighted I was and am with yesterday's<sup>2</sup>—everybody is. Harvey's eyes filled

<sup>1</sup> See Letter VII., note.

<sup>2</sup> Apparently a notice in the *Scotsman* of the Royal Scottish Academy Exhibition.

## Letters of Dr. John Brown [1852

(actually!) with manly tears when he spoke of it, and he said, if not too forward, he would like the writer to know how deeply he felt her words. Go on and prosper, and be as long and as wicked and as delightful as you like. I hope you have not been the worse for your visit here. Speak a good word and strong for *Brodie*. I know you will; he is a fine fellow, with little enough to eat.

I secured your "Cornfield" and rejoiced the heart of Hargitt.—With our best regards to Sir Walter and his wife, yours ever,  
J. BROWN.

The other morning I saw a scene which, were I a P.R.B. and a genius, I would make immortal. Mrs. Wight's Kitchen, the three sisters, in dazzling white bedgowns and nightcaps, making of marmalade, the slanting sunlight streaming in upon them and the bright kitchen things, the seeds of the oranges swimming in golden water, the oranges themselves, the clean deal table, the clean everything.

### LXXIV. To COVENTRY DICK

*Saturday*, written instantan on receipt of yours.  
[September 1852.]

MOST DEAR AND MOST MENDACIOUSEST OF COVENTRIES—Six months without a word!?!? It is impossible, for besides others I know, I sent you a letter of a dulcamarous sort very soon before I went to Skye. . . . What thought you of Thackeray? for never a word of your think got ever I. Is not Glenelg from the sea glorious, and are not the Coolin Hills not to be spoken of with one's hat on? And did you ever go through Lochaber by the Spean and Loch Laggan and Craig Dhu, and were you ever in the forest of Gaick? And were you ever in the Black wood of Rannoch with the evening sun going down behind the Shepherds of Etive?

It was impossible coming to you, quite; we both thought of it, but it was impossible. We were for 3 minutes at your quay, and the *Sine Quâ Non* saw the neat harbour and the lively town, and 'mid screen of trees she saw "my house," but this was all one could do. We went by the *Mountaineer* to Ardrishaig, thence in herring boat of the swiftest and stink- ingest to Ballimore on Loch Fyne, thence by Canal of Crinan to Oban, and thence to Broadford in Skye; what a sail! I

## 1852] Letters of Dr. John Brown

was out all night in Tobermory bay worshipping, pagan-like, the heavenly host. Thence off at 3 of the morning past Ardnamurchan, with the biggest and most blazing of morning stars, and presently the sun rising up. I never saw such a scene. We seemed in a sort of *pro tempore* heaven, earth and sky and sea one imagery, and the hills of Morven and the enchanted hills of Skye and Rum and Egg and even Muck all in a sort of unspeakable beauty and strangeness. I know very well it was quite a pekooliar morning, and would have been noticed in the newspapers if any of our correspondents had seen it. Skye we were in from Saturday to Tuesday morning, and saw Loch Coruisk, which deserves all and more than has been or can be said of it; then back to Oban and through Lochaber to Kingussie, and thence by Rannoch, home. . . .

### LXXV. TO HIS SISTER JANE, AFTERWARDS MRS. WILSON

23 RUTLAND STREET, *Friday* [October 1852].

MY DEAR JANE—Our dear father has got one of his attacks again, not severe, but still he is in bed, and likely to be there for some days. It is the erythema again. So come you in, like a goodest Soul and comfort his soul, which is of the goodest also; let the wholesome Angel remain, and cheer the natives and her parents, with the light of her eyes, and the hearty talk of her truthful and jocund tongue, and let the Helper of Men, Alexander, stay with her and behave himself like a United Presbyterian Brick. But come you in, by the first train, and we will do our best to keep you cheerful. Poor Kitty is in bed; I am so vexed about her, but she is really improving—her Doctor said so to-day.

Our best love to all in that old home<sup>1</sup> which for more than 40 years has been so dear to us; so no more sentimentalism, but merely, yours merely and very, J. BROWN.

My father does not know I am writing for you, but I know it will please him—that lugubrious countenance of yours.

<sup>1</sup> The Secession Manse at Biggar.



# Letters of Dr. John Brown [1853]

## LXXVI. TO LADY TREVELYAN

*Monday Morning, 23 Rutland Street [1853 or 1854].*

MY DEAR LADY TREVELYAN—We (Christy, the man, and I) got you out of your box this morning, earlier, I hope, than you got yourself out of your bed. It was so pleasant and funny to see your face looking out from the shavings and dust, so like yourself, with that odd and pleasant mixture of fun and pathos, which, let me tell you, distinguishes your visage; by *odd* I mean uncommon, especially in women. It was no joke extracting you; the box was too tight, and there was not sufficient *bufferage* all round, so that the shocks the box came through were communicated unbroken to the contents, and there is a crack at one corner, not in any way injuring you and easily to be mended. I like the likeness quite—especially the mouth, since the eyes are denied—but they are your eyes as to form and position and turn. The mouth I think beautiful and *very like*, and I like the strong relief and the sort of side way your face comes out. Thank you very much indeed for it. Sir Walter's little medallion<sup>1</sup> is capital, and set where it should be; he looks very much at home there. Why, when Munro can do such things as this, does he make such flighty, feverish, foolish things as Undine in the Art Treasures? He must eat more of beef and drink more of Bass, and walk ten miles a day and row four.

He has a great as well as a very tender and delicate genius, but he must vindicate his *strength*, as well as his grace and sweetness. He has done all these in you and Sir Walter. Was Dr. Acland in Edinburgh last week? I see his subscription to our fire. I met last night a great and old friend of his, a Miss Campbell, or, as she now (being *aet.* 76) calls herself, *Mrs.*, from Exeter, a finely-preserved courtly old lady, who has seen the world, and is wild still for travelling, and is off in a day or two to Oban, Inverness, and Elgin! and possibly may cross over to Skye!!

Ask the Dr. about her, and ask the Dr. never to be in Edinburgh without calling for me. My best regards to Sir Walter, and my best thanks to him and you for yourself. Mrs. Brown got safely to Pitlochrie on Friday, and would arrive in the Black Wood of Rannoch before 10.—Yours ever,  
J. B.

<sup>1</sup> In the bas-relief Lady Trevelyan wears a medallion brooch of Sir Walter.

1853] Letters of Dr. John Brown

LXXVII. To HIS SON

*Saty. Night* [1853].

DEAREST JOHN—I miss you very much. I got to like you somehow very much at Troiserag; was not this odd? I hear you are good to Mamasi. I went down to Granton to see James Loch away, and if you only saw what a mess on board the *Victoria*, sheep and swine and women and children and rain and smells, and a poor deserter was brought in with soldiers with drawn bayonets, and his hands chained together; poor fellow, I was very sorry for him; and there were 6 young recruits with hardly any clothes and no shoes, and all so wretched.

James went in the other boat, which was much nicer. I hear Uncle John is catching 'lots of fish. Good-bye, my dearest son. I am so much the better of having been with you all, and you were such a nice companion to me.

F O R my dearest  
J O C K.

LXXVIII. To HIS SISTER JANE

23 RUTLAND STREET, *Monday Evening* [1853 ?].

MY DEAR JANE—I propose coming out to my *tea* on Wednesday by the Five o'clock Train! if the Laird and his Lady are agreeable, and would like you and the small woman to come down for me to West Calder, with your utmost hilariousness of countenance and of soul. I am quite done for and tired, and am coming out to the hospitable couple for a day and a half, and then I come back bringing you with me. Kitty is home and better, but not well. She sends her love. My best regards to uncle and aunt and cousins.—Yours ever affectionately,

J. BROWN.

LXXIX. To COVENTRY DICK

23 RUTLAND STREET, *Friday* [*Nouv.* 1853].

MY DEAR COVENTRY—I have got Mrs. Brown home; she was away in London for 7 weeks; we have never been so long separate since we were married. She is better, but by no means

## Letters of Dr. John Brown [1853]

well yet. I have had a great deal of anxiety and misery this winter about her, and indeed this winter has been a very gloomy one. Dr. Scott's illness and death, and my own profound self-disrespect and indifferent health and overwork,—altogether I was in a sorry condition. I get old and worn-out and tired of this everlasting struggle and worry. I have read very little,—Burton's History, *Villette* which I like immensely, and I am reading a sensible and lively book by Dr. Forbes on Ireland; get it if you can. Did you read *Esmond*? I hope you both liked and disliked it; for style and for its detached passages it is wonderful; for its story, disagreeable and unsuccessful. But he is a great fellow and will live when Dickens and Bulwer are no more. I hope you relished Greg's paper on Alison in the *Edinburgh*. Do you go out every day, and do you sleep well? What a blessed power that same sleep is. I am more devoted to it than ever. I wish it were as fond of me as I am of it. I will write immediately after seeing J. Blackwood.

Mrs. Brown joins me in best regards to your sister and self.—Yrs. ever affectly., J. BROWN.

### LXXX. To HIS SISTER JANE

RUTLAND STREET, Thursday [1854].

MY DEAR AND DISGUSTING JANE—For it was disgusting, when James Crum was coming to dinner quite promiscuously and I relied upon you and Alexr. coming over, to find that ugliest and limpest of women had nothing to show me for you but that note, which I mean to tear into 5861 pieces; and then I proposed to myself to have gone with you and Alexr. and Jock (Helen is to be at the Reids') to Peebles, in 3rd class, everybody sitting on everybody else's knee for softness, and you were to sketch most Greigishly<sup>1</sup> the Castle of Neidpath, and Jock was to keep up a perpetual excitement by getting himself drowned every 10 minutes, and Alexander was to sit in the inn showing off the Gyroscope at so much a head, and I was to lie diffused on the grass, thinking as little as I could; and all this and these things is and are in vain now, and Uncle James and I are naturally indignant.

I hope you have been sketching. Love to all.—Your aff. bro. J. B.

<sup>1</sup> Mr. George Greig was her drawing-master.

1854] Letters of Dr. John Brown

LXXXI. TO LADY TREVELYAN

23 RUTLAND STREET, *Sunday afternoon* [1854].

MY DEAR LADY TREVELYAN—I sent off the Drawing yesterday. It showed manifest reluctance to leave its quarters, and all its companions, even Raphael's Virgins, were looking with angry eyes. So you have much to answer for. I am so glad to hear of your great improvement. I knew it was Miss Lofft's father, not brother; but if you will look at these two words as now written, you will see I make very little difference between father and son. I am hoping to get off on Tuesday. Mrs. Brown has had an ugly accident, having fallen and dislocated her thumb; it is now all right, but it has marred her visit a good deal. As to London, my desire of going is fast dying. Mr. and Mrs. Combe are here; I was at the examination of his School on Friday. Human Nature is a queer *odd* thing; I found him as sectarian and uncharitable about Phrenology as many men are about Calvinism. I get sick of doctrines of all sorts, agreeing with everybody in some things and with nobody in all things. But I am in a bad humour somehow at present. If I saw your happy face I daresay that would put me right. Give my best regards to Sir Walter and Miss Lofft. Let me hear from or of you before long.—Yours ever truly,  
J. BROWN.

LXXXII. TO HIS WIFE

*Tuesday night, HÔTEL DES PRINCES [PARIS, 19th March 1854].*

MY DEAREST KITTY — We have had two beautiful days, clear and cool. Yesterday we went to the Jardin des Plantes and Père la Chaise, and in the evening, after dining at the table d'hôte, to the Gymnase, a beautiful little Theatre, quite perfect. Oh how I wished to have you with me, it would have so delighted you! The second piece—we saw three small ones—was *La Crise*, such a very touching strange piece, and the part of the wife played so beautifully by Mlle. Judith. A husband calls in the Dr. to tell him that his wife has gone all queer after 10 years' happiness, that she is mad about socialism. The Dr. offers to cure her, and after a great many malapropos, the wife, who is a fine creature, and the Dr., who is a good sort of fellow, find themselves

## Letters of Dr. John Brown [1854]

in their very great passion forced to run off with each other. The husband comes in to her while she is waiting undecided, and a long and very powerful, intense but perfectly quiet conversation takes place; it ends well by her opening the door in a sort of stupid terror, expecting to find the Dr., when in burst two beautiful children; she takes them and hugs them. The acting and music and everything was perfect. Jane was there and quite happy. Up in the top gallery I saw a beautiful bare arm and plump hand lying upon the dark velvet, and keeping time to the music; it belonged to a little grisette like our Nelly.

I am for ever wishing you to be here. Oh, my own Kitty, if it had but pleased God—and what is more to the point, if it had pleased *me*—I might have had you and Jock here at this very time! Jock in his kilt would have astonished them. I trust, however, that I may be the better of this, though I am the same dull dog as I was.

### LXXXIII. TO THE SAME

PAU, *March 29th* [1854].

MY OWN DEAREST KITTY—Here we are in this fine old town, in a quaint old Hotel. We got on very well in the Diligence, leaving Bordeaux at 6 last night and getting here at 2 this afternoon. It is a most beautiful country, everything so picturesque—the bullocks with their clumsy carts, and the handsome, bold-eyed men, and the immense tracts of moorland and forest. This is the most exquisite place I was ever in, the Pyrenees lying quite near, of immense height and covered with snow, a horizontal sun lighting up their heights and darkening their hollows. How you would delight in it; it is like Crieff immensely magnified, a fine river and Henry the Fourth's castle. I never hoped to see such a sight as these mountains—their pure beauty and their nearness and inaccessibleness.

The *men* are very fine-looking, few of the women. We found it much pleasanter in the Diligence than we expected; the roads are good and we had 6 horses and went at a good pace.

## LXXXIV. TO THE SAME

MADRID, *Monday, 10th April* [1854].

MY DEAREST KITTY—I sent you a small note this morning; the postage is 2/8, it seems. We start to-morrow at nine for Toledo; this is the limit of our wanderings; we then return to Madrid and stay here till Tuesday, and then to Burgos and Bayonne and Pau. I think James Crum is determined to halve the distance and stay at Burgos a night, otherwise we would have 52 hours of travelling, and such travelling! It is terrific. I don't mean dangerous, but the bumping and wrenching and tossing and dust you can have no idea of. We had a very wild ride from Valladolid to Madrid. We crossed the mountains of Guadarrama, and at one point we were 5094 feet above the sea—higher than the top of Ben Nevis—in the midst of snow and pines. I awoke out of a sort of nap, and found myself before a large mountain so like Troiserag!<sup>1</sup> with pines, but not nearly so fine as Struan's. Nothing can be uglier than the Castiles—no wood, no water, everlasting mangy plains, and such roads! The mules and bullocks and waggons and picturesque men interest you, but it is very dreary work. This is a showy, stinking, proud, and poor city; it was an outrage upon nature to build a city in such a place, in the midst of a wilderness. We bungled to-day entirely, and saw nothing but the Royal Stables and Coachhouses. . . . I hope we will go to the Theatre and see the national dancing.

## LXXXV. TO THE SAME

*Saturday night, 15th April 1854,*  
CASA VISCAYNA, MADRID.

MY OWN DEAREST KITTY—I was so delighted to get the *Scotsman*. It looked like a friend; it was quite a Godsend to us all and was instantly halved by the impatient Poppleton. Yesterday, Mrs. Crum and I went to a very fine sight. We saw the very choice of the best of Madrid, and some of the *men* were very noble-looking, one in particular; and the ladies were the best I have seen, but not one real beauty, except perhaps a girl about 14. They have a grave, rather heavy expression, but are, I can see, great flirts, in their

<sup>1</sup> A hill towards the lower end of Loch Rannoch.

## Letters of Dr. John Brown [1854

grave fashion. They are much stouter than the French; indeed a great many women of 40 and upwards are very fat. We went to the Royal Collection of Pictures. It is wonderful; for quality, as well as numbers, far before the *Louvre*, I would say. One head of the Virgin mourning for her Son, by Titian, is unspeakably pathetic: how much you would like them.

You would like our dinners, so leisurely, and such good cooking. We cannot manage the garlic, but have passed from disliking and then not disliking, to positively liking, the wine out of the skins. We had rain yesterday and to-day, and the trees are bursting into leaf, the acacias beautiful; but this is a poor place as a whole—to London or Paris. London is the most wonderful of them all. I continually think of your delight for a fortnight in Paris.

*Sunday Morning.*—My own dearest, another beautiful day; we have clouds, which is a great relief from the glare of the sun, and the trees are all green. If I were you, or even half you, how happy would I be here, and indeed everywhere! But I have no doubt, in spite of myself, this journey has done me good.

The Bull-fight is to-night, Sunday—or rather this afternoon, in honour of Easter Sunday! Mrs. C. is not going. Kitty, my dearest, be sure and drive out as often as you can—everything should yield to your gaining strength. My grateful regards to Dr. Begbie for his kindness to you. Good-bye. Say to Jackie I will write him about the Bulls. Kiss them. Oh, for a sight of you all!—Your ever affect.

J. B.

Have you had to pay double for any of my letters? I hope to hear from you perhaps to-day. No man ever had a better hope. I shall dress your hair in the Spanish style—it is very much like your own.

### LXXXVI. To LADY TREVELYAN

EDINBURGH, 23 RUTLAND STREET, *June 12th, 1854.*

MY DEAR LADY TREVELYAN—It was a great pleasure to get your kind letter, though we were grieved to hear of Sir Walter's illness, and your anxiety about him. No doubt it is gout; I am a believer *now* in this omnipresent demon of the body. He plays the devil with everything, and is always

most horrible and least perilous when he shows himself openly. Mrs. Brown is greatly better; I now have a firm hope that she is to get quite well again and be healthier and happier than she has been for years. She has had a sad winter of it, with her own suffering and anxiety about me—wretch that I am. Women are infinitely better than men. I think there will be seven of them to one of men in the Elysian Fields. Every one says I am better, except myself; I say I am worse. I had a rapid but very interesting Tour—to Paris, Bordeaux, Pau, Bayonne, St. Sebastian, Vittoria, Burgos, Valladolid, Madrid, Aranjuez, Toledo, and back to Pau. I brought home from that glorious place a couple of friends, of each of whom it was not easy to say which was the nearer the next world. I got them safe to home; one is slowly recovering, the other lingering on to the end, but good and happy. . . . How you would have delighted in Pau! the Pyrenees twenty miles off looking in at every window, the Stone Pines, the air, the simple, happy, humdrum people, and the moonlight,—but Toledo is the place for moonlight! I never saw anything so exquisite as one night there with the full moon and a naked heaven, and the Tagus unseen, mourning through darkness and perplexing rocks, the Alcazar with its magnificent front, with the light full on it, and beyond on the other side of the river deserts of vast eternity. You must go to Toledo before you leave this dim spot. Madrid is showy and tawdry and poor and wicked, but the Gallery is wonderful—I should think not much if at all inferior in value to the Louvre. The Titians and Tintoretts and Paul Veroneses and Velasquezes and *one* Murillo (Murillo is feeble) and two or three of Leonardo da Vinci's. Titian seems to me the greatest of all painters, and his "Entombment" in the Louvre the most impressive piece of colour I ever saw. I hope you got a good day for Mr. Powell's house; I wish I could get a Calotype of your sketch. Noel Paton is coming here to-night to sit and be silent and sketch. Give our best regards to Sir Walter and yourself. I need not say how happy I always am to see your hand. God bless you.—Yours ever,

J. BROWN.

#### LXXXVII. TO HIS SISTER JANE

*Sunday Evening, 23 RUTLAND STREET [circa 1855].*

MY DEAR JANE—How do you feel? Are you as anxious to see us, as we you? Are you an affectionate Sputchard and



## Letters of Dr. John Brown [1855]

dutchard? for if you are not both, then I have done with you. You might write me a letter twice a week, or rather, have written, for I hope to see your jocose visage in a day or two. Boxer mourns for you like any sucking Dove; he coos like any turtle dove, or like all the turtle doves in the universe in one, and he relieves himself, and the cooing, by an occasional howl of terrific plaintiveness and length in which may be recognised by the instructed ear, the words, "Jane! Brown! return! to me! your Boxer! waits! and weeps! and howls! and growls! and declares on his honour! as a gentleman! that suicide!! must ensue!!! if you Jane! Brown! do not return to me!!!" His venerable and familiar friend, your father, is in bed again with St. Anthony's fire in his leg, but he is better. Helen and Jock are at Mr. Oliphant's School, and Jock is in mighty glee, and on his books is written—

### JOX BOOK,

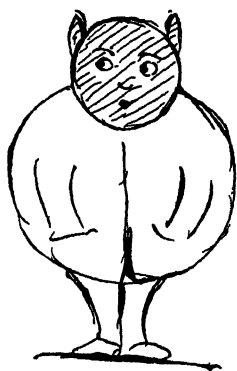
hich, you observe, saves two letters, and an apostrophe, besides being itself a joke of some size and depth, and flavour. Are you kind to Uncle James? Are you hungry? are you cheerful? Do you sleep 7 hours out of the 24? Do you remember the serious things I said *de dentibus tuis*, for which words see Ainsworth's Dictionary. Good-night, my dearest Jane. You will soon be home, which will be a great comfort to us all, Boxer and me especially.—Your affectionate brother,  
J. B.

### LXXXVIII. TO HIS WIFE

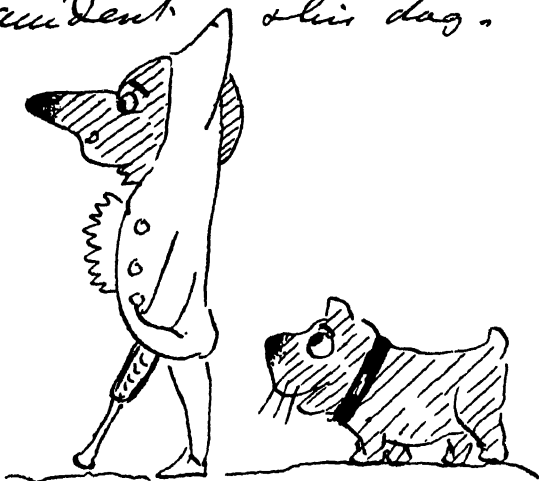
EDINBURGH, 28th June 1855, ONE P.M. *Saty.*

MY DEAREST KITTY—The children are away to Arthur's Lodge, and are going down to bathe at Portobello. I take D. and W. Maclagan<sup>1</sup> out at 6. I will go over and dine with my father. I do hope you are getting some good now of the change. This is a very sweet fresh day; the sunset last night was exquisite. John was so nice, excited but calm. We had made arrangements with the adjoining farmer to get his horses to assist us in dragging out that perch, and began our operations near the stump of a tree, so as to hold on, till the horses arrived, but the perch remained at home. Nothing could be more lovely than the place, except John's fun and

<sup>1</sup> Sir Douglas Maclagan and his brother, the Archbishop of York.



Tell Janie that this is  
 copied from a drawing by  
 Michael Angelo - it repre-  
 sents Viglath Pilesen after  
 the accident. This dog.





1855] Letters of Dr. John Brown

ways, his sense and vivid energetic ways, his childishness, and unconsciousness, and goodness. Miserable news from the siege; it looks as if they are getting to the opposite extreme of rashness.

LXXXIX. To COVENTRY DICK

EDINBURGH, 23 RUTLAND STREET, 6th Decr. 1855.

MY DEAR COVENTRY— . . . Did you see Pitt and Fox in the last *Quarterly*?

I wearied of Thackeray's winking (as somebody else said) constantly to the reader and telling you his think about his peoples. But what a quantity of good matter in that book,<sup>1</sup> and what a thoroughly good style. Have you read *Little Dorrit*, No. 1? Nothing more Dickensish could be, in good and bad. Dickens is a child of genius, but only a child; he never progresses, never improves, never studies, never restrains. Read *Dr. Antonio*, and if you don't like it you are not the A. C. D. of old.

Are you really coming? Speed your coming.—Yours  
ever and your sister's,  
J. B.

XC. To HIS SON

*Tuesday night [1856].*

MY DEAREST JOHN—I am very cold, having just come in from Colinton. The moon is as big as the drawing-room table, and was getting up with difficulty from behind Arthur's Seat,—I suppose some boys at Duddingston were holding her down by the tail. Did you ever see the *Moon's tail*? You can only see it in the dark. How are your toes? I am so sorry for you, my dear friend; get Dick to lick them. Are those rude boys still plaguing you? I hope not. Are you going on with Queen Mary's history? and are you quiet and nice to Mamasi and to Helen? I am sure you are. I wish I were inside this letter, even though I had to lie in the letter-box all night. Give my friendly regards to James, and ask if the 5000 pigeons and the 600 weight of soap have come yet? . . . Good-night, my dear boy. Be sure to look for the moon's tail, and if you can,

<sup>1</sup> *The Newcomes.*

## Letters of Dr. John Brown [1856]

bring in a basinful of moonshine and wash your hands and toes in it—you have no idea how queer you will feel.

Good-night again, and kiss Heleny for me, and Mama.—  
Your affectionate father, JOHN BROWN.

### XC. To HIS FATHER

23 RUTLAND STREET, *Monday Morning* [1856].

MY DEAR FATHER—I do hope you are not shutting yourself up and studying and writing; you may, from long habit, be unconscious of the effort, but it is quite certain, that by concentrating in your brain the nervous energy, for the purpose of thinking out a vast, complicated, and severe subject, and then committing it in the fewest and strongest words to the smallest space of paper, you by necessity withdraw nervous energy from the rest of the body, you render your digestion imperfect, and your liver torpid, and all this reacts upon the brain, and you have giddiness and disturbance of vision. Try by all means to diffuse this nervous energy, by being out of doors, by being idle, by talking and being talked to, by sleeping.

The Bishop of Edinburgh has issued an interdict against the Bishop of Jerusalem for having intercourse with outlaws like Mr. Drummond,<sup>1</sup> and of course everybody went to hear the interdicted Bishop at St. Thomas'.—Yours ever affectionately,  
J. Brown.

### XCII. To LADY TRIVELYAN

*Sunday Evening*, 23 RUTLAND STREET [4th Evg. 1856]

MY DEAR LADY TRIVELYAN—I wish you could have seen Noel Paton's picture "The Soldier's Return." It is by far his finest work, worth any amount of "Pursuits of Pleasure." We had it here for two days, and you have no notion of the excitement and impression it made. Be sure you make all your London friends see and study it, though they should carry ladders with them to the Academy. "The Pursuit of Pleasure" goes also. He has altered and says he has improved it. Bits of it I always liked; its whole, never.

<sup>1</sup> The Rev. D. T. K. Drummond belonged to the English Episcopal Church in Scotland, and was not under the jurisdiction of the Scotch Episcopal Bishop of Edinburgh.

## 1856] Letters of Dr. John Brown

When are you coming? and how are you? My poor Kitty has not been well again, suffering from that vile old pain.

Do you hear from Mr. Ruskin? and do you write him? If you do, tell him I wrote him a huge letter, in my brain, after reading that glorious 3rd Volume.<sup>1</sup> (It, the letter, is now gone beyond all fetching.) Tell him how delighted I was with it, especially the chapters on the Pathetic Fallacy, on Finish, and on Scott's poetry. I have sent you a *Witness* with a small piece of my incoherence, about Noel's picture; if you think she would care for it, pass it on to —. . . . I hope you have better accounts of her. Give her, and her friend who is now reading this, my best regards, and the same to Sir Walter.—Yours ever,  
J. BROWN.

### XCIII. To COVENTRY DICK

23 RUTLAND STREET, EDINBURGH,  
*Sunday Evening, 6th April 1856.*

MY DEAR COVENTRY—I am very glad to have seen you, you were so much better than I had expected, so like your old self. How have you been since? and whence do you get that blessed cheerfulness and content? . . .

I have been making a secret but searching inquiry as to your *Thesis* that no woman likes, in her heart, *Don Quixote*. I know *two*, and think to-morrow to find a third, thus proving, *per excipienda*, that you are right.

The Jubilation<sup>2</sup> comes off on Tuesday. The old man gets all manner of addresses and 600 pounds on a silver tray. He means to add something to the 600 and make them over to the Synod as a nest-egg for the proposed fund for old Ministers.

Mrs. Brown, who is one of the two, sends her best regards.  
—Yours ever affectly.,  
J. BROWN.

### XCIV. To MISS JESSIE CRUM

23 RUTLAND STREET, *Monday* [11th Nov. 1856].

MY DEAR JESSIE—Many thanks for the photograph, and more for the letter, which was so like yourself, with your queer subdued, deep, shamefaced enthusiasm, and all the old

<sup>1</sup> Of *Modern Painters*.

<sup>2</sup> The celebration of his father's jubilee as a minister. See *Life of John Brown, D.D.*, by Dr. Cairns, pp. 321 ff.

## Letters of Dr. John Brown [1856

ways of that Bridge at Pau, and elsewhere. I knew Thackeray would go to your heart. I do hope you are to be at the dinner to-morrow. We have just come home from the third George. We liked it better than the first time. What power and gentleness and restraint! I wonder at and love him more and more. To-night he took the whole house by the heart, and held them; they were still, and serious, and broke out wildly at the end. We have seen a great deal of him; he comes and sits for hours, and lays that great nature out before us, with its depths and bitternesses, its tenderness and desperate truth. It is so sad to see him so shut out from all cheer and hope. He was delighted with your William Thomson; he said he was an angel and better, and must have wings under his flannel waistcoat. I said he had, for I had seen them. Get him to come back to you after the lecture and sing the "Cabin Boy." We would have been so happy to have come if we could.

My love to Mrs. Margt.<sup>1</sup> and the heavenly and deceitful Mary and yourself.—Yrs. ever, J. BROWN.

I told Thackeray what Uncle James said of his first lecture, that at its close, after the brightness and sustained light of his words, "*it was like putting out the gas.*" He said it was the best thing he had heard about the lecture. Wasn't it good? How gladly we two infatuates would come to-day and have the dinner at No. 2 and the lecture again. It is like "Fidelio" of Beethoven, or "The Magic Flute," or "Jupiter" of Mozart. You like it always the more; you know it as a whole and what is coming.—Yrs. again, and your sisters', J. B.

*Tuesday morning.*

### XCV. TO MISS MARY GRAY CRUM

*April 8th [1857].*

MY DEAR MARY GRAY—Thanks for your welcome letter; we were just hungering for some such Crum of comfort, in our present forlorn state. They have taken away our god<sup>2</sup> and (in the meantime) we are out of employment. If there was one thing we are grateful to him for above another, it was that he

<sup>1</sup> Margaret Crum, wife of Professor Thomson, now Lord Kelvin, and sister of Miss Jessie Crum.

<sup>2</sup> Thackeray.

delivered us from Mary Queen of Scots, and Bruce, and Haggis, and Burns, and Auld Reekie, and Hugh Miller. I have not yet heard from him; he will be much engaged. How the two girls would expatiate over that great visage, and interfere with the lower part of it, and what a talk at breakfast on Saturday, and how deliciously we would all be cuddled and cut up, or rather 1st cut, and then cuddled, because his sting comes first, and then his own honey for its cure, and more! Wasn't that beautiful of Lord Neaves, *Satire* and *Sympathy* rising in his deepest and highest nature, and rising together, though they took each their several ways. I saw he was so surprised and grateful at being so spoken of and understood. If you had seen his pathetic, dumb face, like a great child going to cry, when he stood up to return thanks for his Two Muses, his Daughters, you would have had a good honest cry, you and Jessie, as I very nearly had; only men's tears are seldom honest, and if honest, are Dearly bought. He thought he had made an immense fool of himself in his speech till he saw it next morning. I was so vex'd for Alexander not getting to the dinner. You and he must come through, and we will have a dinner to the memory of the dinner and of him for whom it was. Dr. Hanna's was still better than the report; therefore you may set him down as an ecclesiastical brick of the finest clay, and a Free Kirk brick, which is the 8th wonder of Time, even though in so writing I outrage your feelings as the daughter of your mother. It seems to me that it is being brought about by Providence and another woman (you) that your father's new house is to be within a mile of Edinburgh town. I know the best of all possible places for it, and nearer to Glasgow in point of time than this new tragic and uncanny Birkenshaw. I don't go into any discussion at present as to the sex of Providence; like everything that is best, she is a she, I am persuaded. Don't laugh very much at me for having sent Jessie my speech. I suppose she keeps few things from you, as you two, I fear, doat upon each other, and never can be sundered without tears. This you must tell her is her letter as well as yours.—Yours and hers ever,

J. B.

Mrs. Brown liked your letter so much, and I suspect likes the penwoman too, a little. I am writing in the slippers, which accounts perhaps for a certain soft-heartedness, and



## Letters of Dr. John Brown [1857]

such a warmth and softness and comfort and *crumfort* of *soul* and *sole*.

This was given me to-day by the Reporter.<sup>1</sup> It is what our great friend said of your strange friend; *he* was too much all of a heap to hear any of it. He is conceited enough to send it to you. Thanks for your letter. J. B.

“Mr. Thackeray begged a toast, and said :

““Some years ago, when I was working very hard, and getting small praise and less pay, I received a little packet from Edinburgh containing a silver statue of an ugly little god, bearing an inscription, “*Grati et gratae Edinenses*,” 80 of whom had sent forward the very first testimonial I had ever received in my life,<sup>2</sup> and begged me to accept the ugly little god, and to keep it as a token of their sincere regard. I have got it now, and I shall always keep it, please God. I have always had a kindness to the place from which I received this very first mark of hospitality and affection; and you may fancy that I have a special kindness to the person who, I believe, was the originator of that harmless conspiracy. Will you permit me, my Lord Neaves, to interpolate a toast which is not on the card? Although I am travelling quite out of the record of toasts, I know you will join me in acknowledging the worth and kindness and goodness of a gentleman whom you all know, and whose worth and kindness and goodness I shall always remember. I beg you, therefore, to drink the health of my dear and kind and good old friend, Dr. John Brown.’”

### XCVI. TO LADY TREVELYAN

23 RUTLAND STREET, *Thursday* [circa May 1857].

MY DEAR LADY TREVELYAN—I feel as if I had been more than usually (and that is saying not little) mean. I got a kind letter from you and a capital Anti-Toll one from Sir Walter, with which I rejoiced the cockles of the *Scotsman's* heart. We were very much disappointed at your not coming, and very sorry indeed for the sad cause of it. This death is for ever intermeddling and confounding us. Miss Graham's<sup>3</sup> favourite

<sup>1</sup> J. Irvine Smith.

<sup>2</sup> See note to “Thackeray's Death,” *Horæ Subsecivæ*, 3rd Series.

<sup>3</sup> Miss Stirling Graham, authoress of “Mystifications.” See *Horæ Subsecivæ*, 3rd Series.

nephew Graham is dead, and his wife and his two daughters (Night and Morning) are on their way home. Miss Graham feels it more than she says, as her way is—and yours, too, I daresay. How delightful Wallington must be now! *I am often there.* The crows and the young beech leaves and the cattle and “tattle of the whole,” from your Ladyship to Mrs. Handyside, and from Peter to Sir Walter. We were angry at Thackeray about you, and he was ashamed and angry at himself—very—he confessed it all to Mrs. B. He was ill, and cross at the time; he will make the amends yet to you, and you will like him and he you, yet. He is a finer, larger, loveabler man, or rather *fellow*, than ever. We are more infatuated about him than ever. Did you read his speeches? He was in such a fright, and stumbled and stuck delightfully—and thought he had made an utter ass of himself. Wm. Stirling did his part excellently, short, witty, courteous. . . . How are you? are you any sturdier? Are you any reasonabler about yourself? . . . How I wish I could put myself into the train and be booked for Morpeth. . . . You will be here soon, and I hope you will stay some time.

Mrs. Brown sends her best regards to yourself and Sir Walter. How is your game little English Terrier?—Yours ever and Sir Walter's,  
J. BROWN.

Dobell had a very pleasant, poetical, and unintelligible Lecture on the Nature of Poetry. He is a fine fellow, without one particle of knowledge of men and women, or anything under the moon.

#### XCVII. To COVENTRY DICK

Sunday [1857]

MY DEAR COVENTRY—Have you read Froude, and have you gone into *Aurora Leigh*?—a book of immense genius and immense faults, and needlessly painful and indelicate, or perhaps more. Nowadays everybody insists on turning their own and everybody else's insides *all* out. We have got into the pathological School in poetry and in novels. Have you read *Jessie Cameron*? *That* is all health and pleasantness and hearty Scotch nature.

Have you looked at the speechings of that infinite Swell and Snob Sir Lytton Bulwig? How delightful his saying of Chalmers—“an understanding so masculine *couched* in a style so gravely correct”! Hummest of Bugs, but the world

## Letters of Dr. John Brown [1857]

likes humbugs, and makes them. The only thing I agree with Bulwer in, and think he speaks a word in season about, though against Edward Vincorcy Kent, is his upholding the teaching of the dead languages. I shall be happy to have a duello with you on this pint. I sent you a rigmarole upon children and their Picture Books, knowing you to be one of themselves.—Yours ever, J. BROWN.

Do you take porridge? If you do, I would call your corner in this new newspaper "Meditations upon a little Oatmeal by a man out of the world, who sees and does not share." You would get all your Sonnets and quirks and cranks out, and it would amuse you. Do do it.

### XCVIII. TO THE SAME

23 RUTLAND STREET, *May 18th, 1857.*

MY DEAR COVENTRY—Mr. Peddie told me to-day that you have lost Wamba. I know too well what this is to think it anything less than a great sorrow. I would not like to tell almost anybody how much I have felt in like circumstances. The love of the dumb, unfailing, happy friend is so true, so to be depended on, is so free of what taints much of human love, that the loss of it ought never to be made light of. Had he been unwell for some time? He was not old enough to die of age. We have one such, and I don't know what Madam and I would do were he to die. How are you and why did you never come here? Write me soon. There are many things I would like to ask you about and some day I may take a run down and see you. I shall never see that dear fourfooted friend and it is all my own fault. I never did.—Yours ever, J. BROWN.

### XCIX. TO HIS FATHER

BOWDON, *28th June [1857].*

MY DEAR FATHER—We got here on Friday about  $\frac{1}{2}$  past six. Kitty got on very well to Preston, but the Railway after that shook her, and gave her a night of much suffering, so that yesterday she stayed here. To-day she is easier. James and Mrs. James are well and in their element, making the greatest possible number as happy as they can. . . . This is a cheerful, commodious house with great sleeping room.

1857] Letters of Dr. John Brown

It is in Cheshire, and, being on a height, commands a fine reach of the country Kendal and the Lake Mountains looked very noble as we passed.

Yesterday we went into the Exhibition, which is on this line of railway; indeed the railways come into it. It is a wonderful sight, and as remarkable for the common-sense and quietness of all its arrangements as for its specific glory as a collection of £6,000,000 worth of pictures and other objects of Art. Mrs. James and I went over one long gallery. The most interesting things in it are the *portraits*; everybody feels their power. The holy families and saints were not much attended to. After coming back we went to a park, Dunham, near this, the Earl of Stamford's, and enjoyed the old woods. Dr. Begbie was to see you on Friday. We were in the old church of Bowdon where the Doctor was married, and you may tell him he did not praise it or the place too much. The chimes of which he spoke we propose to get up, so soon as we can get a marriage up.—Your ever affect. son,

J. BROWN.

C. To Miss JESSIE CRUM

23 RUTLAND STREET, *Friday* [1857].

MY DEAR JESSIE—Everybody should do the right thing, at the right time; the right time for me to write to you about the Art Treasures was when I promised to do so, and now I am jaded and sulky and ungrateful and inarticulate.

I would have enjoyed Manchester more (and the more would have been very much indeed) had you been there, and had Mrs. Brown been free of pain and able to enjoy it to the full of her heart. She did enjoy it greatly in spite of her suffering.

You must go before it closes and spend two days in the Water Colours and two in the drawings and engravings. Besides Turner, who is first and the rest nowhere, you must study Hunt, Prout, Fielding, D. Cox, Cattermole, Fripp, old Stothard, Duncan, and Weir's Cocks and Hens.

I left Mrs. Brown at Fulford near York, in a drowsy, kindly house, with lively girls in it, to pet her, and save her all sorts of work. Your work, I suppose, goes on. Were you ever in York? If not, get William or Alex. or both to take you, and let one day be a Sunday. I don't think I ever was so impressed with man's work, as with the Minster.

## Letters of Dr. John Brown [1857]

It is far before St. Paul's or Notre Dame or Toledo. It is the sort of thing Handel would have built, if his bump had been building, simple, strong, delicate in details, and with that look of the infinite and eternal which we all need. But I am writing a sort of article, and you are, very properly and heartily, laughing at it, and me!—Yrs. ever truly,

J. BROWN.

I was, as usual, amazed at Uncle James's intuitive sense of what is *good* in pictures and prints; and indeed everything that he likes is always good. He may not like things he should, or that "we" like, but he never likes a wrong thing, which is more than "we" can say.

### CI. TO JOHN MACFARLANE

*Tuesday Evening [circa 1857].*

MY DEAR JOHNNIE MACFARLANE—For you still exist in my mind as your former small self, with two immense eyes and two small scarlet legs. I was so glad Lizzie and you wrote these letters. I know this will do her great good, and you must make her wear a perpetual G R I N. Moreover, as Sailors always never know what to do with their tin, I propose that you get a comfortable Drosky and drive the 2 and the 3 and Dickie and the Mary's dog over by Traquair to St. Mary's Loch, and go as far up the Yarrow as you can—taking tea at the Gordon Arms Inn, on your return, and asking *for ham and eggs*. If you do this, you will remember the day with pleasure when lying off Canton—or sailing down the Straits of Malacca in a Thunder Storm. Moreover, secondly, it behoves you to spend 7/6 upon Lizzie in the form of Ruskin's *Letters on Drawing*; and so good-bye, and make the most of your time—you are a happy fellow this night, and the women are sure to spoil you.

Now, do make out St. Mary's Loch, and get up the passage from Scott, and start early, but not without breakfast.—Yours ever affectionately,

J. BROWN.

### CII. TO MISS NANCY SMITH

23 RUTLAND STREET, *Wednesday [July 1857].*

MY DEAR NANCY—R A B and his clerk are coming out by the early train to-morrow. The clerk will have had his

## 1857] Letters of Dr. John Brown

breakfast, but R A B must have a quarter of lamb (raw) ready for him and a washing basin full of new milk. Sandie Leechman will be happy to furnish the milk.—Yours and everybody else's affectionately,  
THE CLERK.

In the Preface to the Illustrated Edition of *Rab and his Friends* (1862), Dr. Brown refers to the visit to Biggar mentioned in the above note, and relates as follows the circumstances under which *Rab* was written :—

“My uncle, the Rev. Dr. Smith of Biggar, asked me to give a lecture in my native village, the shrewd little capital of the Upper Ward. I never lectured before; I have no turn for it; but *Avunculus* was urgent, and I had an odd sort of desire to say something to these strong-brained, primitive people of my youth, who were boys and girls when I left them. I could think of nothing to give them. At last I said to myself, ‘I’ll tell them Ailie’s story.’ I had often told it to myself; indeed, it came on me at intervals almost painfully, as if demanding to be told, as if I heard Rab whining at the door to get in or out—

Whispering how meek and gentle he could be;

or as if James was entreating me on his deathbed to tell all the world what his Ailie was. But it was easier said than done. I tried it over and over, in vain. At last, after a happy dinner at Hanley—why are the dinners always happy at Hanley?—and a drive home alone through

The gleam, the shadow, and the peace supreme

of a midsummer night, I sat down about twelve and rose at four, having finished it. I slunk off to bed satisfied and cold. I don’t think I made almost any changes in it. I read it to the Biggar folk in the school-house, very frightened, and felt I was reading it ill, and their honest faces intimated as much in their affectionate puzzled looks. . . .

“I was at Biggar the other day, and some of the good folks told me, with a grave smile peculiar to that region, that when Rab came to them in print he was so good that they wouldn’t believe he was the same Rab I had delivered in the school-room—a testimony to my vocal powers of impressing the multitude somewhat conclusive.”

# Letters of Dr. John Brown [1857]

## CHIL. To MISS JESSIE CRUM

23 RUTLAND STREET, 3rd October [1857].

MY DEAR JESSIE—I ought long before this to have told you how much we enjoyed our not seeing Arran and our seeing you; it was a bright intense sort of day, such as I have not many of now. Mrs. Brown will never rest, she says, till she sees the wonderful creature (Arran) without cloud, for it is a wonderful creature, it is so much a one-thing.

I have to thank you for making me go to Mr. Raleigh.<sup>1</sup> I wish we had such a man here, so much manly, reasonable, honest, earnest thought and feeling, and so unspoiled, and so “about his Father’s business,” not his own. I like that face, its truthful, powerful, steady, restrained enthusiasm. I am so glad I have seen and heard him; there are so few preachers I can hear with patience, and still fewer with benefit. I will never miss any chance of hearing him, and I know he will be as good, indeed better, than his words, and will be always the same. Do you know, I like much about your Thornliebank minister; he is by no means of the herd.

I saw the house your aunt died in. What is she now doing? Is she in cold obstruction, not dead but sleeping? Or is she in a quiet ecstasy? I think after death the likeliest thing is that the soul falls asleep, and does not even dream, so that from our death to the Great day is to our consciousness but the twinkling of an eye.

We are all home. Jock is away to the Academy. Heleny was to have gone to Germany, but the Cholera is raging there. Mrs. Brown is stronger, but not strong, never almost free of pain. I am so sorry to see Margaret; so sad to have her days to spend horizontally, but she will have her own times of better pleasures than mere wild health.

Ruskin is to be in Glasgow lecturing; he will probably live with Mr. Gray. You *must* let me make him known to you. Never believe one word against him; he is odd and wilful, and not to be gainsayed, but he is pure and good, and an amazing genius.

Our best regards to you all. You were so nice and kind and cordial all of you. Write and tell me what you are about.—Yours ever,  
J. BROWN.

<sup>1</sup> The Rev. Alexander Raleigh, D.D., London.

1858] Letters of Dr. John Brown

CIV. TO PRINCIPAL SHAIRP<sup>1</sup>

EDINBURGH, 23 RUTLAND STREET, 27th January 1858.

MY DEAR SIR—Let me, though a stranger to you, thank you from my heart for your noble lecture.<sup>2</sup> I have not been so moved with any words for months. You took me by the heart, and held me there from first to last. It is an odd sort of praise, but it is at least an honest one, when a man says to another man, "These are exactly *my* ideas!" I cannot help saying for myself this much, that it was almost ludicrous the nicety with which some of your thoughts, and, indeed, the whole scope and spirit of your argument and its enforcement, was felt by me to be the expression of my own old but somewhat amorphous convictions. I trust the lecture will be largely circulated. I meant forthwith to send forth a covey of the pamphlet to all sorts of people. I said to myself, and you must pardon me for repeating it to you, "Give me twenty such men in our Scottish Universities, and I'll engage to 'reform' them, without much more of public meetings and commissions. *This is a Scottish Arnold*, the real spiritual son (not the ape or imitator) of 'Black Tom,'—like, yet different, being more like himself than any one else." May God spare you for much good! I was specially delighted with all you say about *style*. That is a fine bit of French from Buffon, and involves the whole truth, "The style is the man." Good writing, like good breeding, comes from keeping good company. Excuse all this. It is your own fault. You have kindled me up, and set me a-thinking. . . .—Yours very truly,  
J. BROWN.

CV. TO JOHN TAYLOR BROWN

Monday Evening [26th April 1858].

MY DEAR JOHN—I got your kind note. . . . You would see that I have lost my dear old patient and friend Lord Dunfermline,<sup>3</sup> one of the last of the great race—a man we can

<sup>1</sup> Published in *Principal Shairp and his Friends*, edited by W. Knight.

<sup>2</sup> "The Uses of the Study of Latin Literature."

<sup>3</sup> James, 1st Lord Dunfermline, 3rd son of General Sir Ralph Abercromby, was born in 1776, entered Parliament in 1807, along with Francis Jeffrey represented Edinburgh in the first Reformed Parliament, and was chosen Speaker of the House of Commons in 1835. Latterly he lived at Colinton House, near Edinburgh, and for many years Dr. Brown visited him twice a week.



## Letters of Dr. John Brown [1858

never see the like of again, for we can never, thank God, see a man who has come into public life through such perils. He was intensely political; indeed politics as the management of public affairs was to him a sort of religion, a thing he had sworn to, and to which his entire nature was given. I never knew a man who regarded the *people* with such profound interest and affection. He cared little for speculation or for literature, or even for society, but for managing men, for advancing liberty and widening and deepening the issues of political life, I never saw any man have such a steady passionate regard, and this without one particle of self-seeking or personal pride. He seemed to lose himself in the contemplation of great general results. He was gruff in manner, and careless, but compact and often happy in speech, but he was full of courage, sincerity, and practical sagacity. He was getting always the more liberal, and was an out-and-out Voluntary, regretting that he would be *away* before the mighty contest began; but he saw it on the sky-line, coming nearer and looking larger, and he always said, no such tremendous conflict had ever been witnessed as that which *must* end in the destruction of all State religions.

He had much of his father's (Sir Ralph) turn for war, and watched with extraordinary intelligence the Crimean and Indian wars.

He disliked Jeffrey and indeed all men chiefly literary or eloquent; he seemed to think politics too intense and too serious to be in any way adorned. In his immediate relations as a husband and son and father he was amazingly faithful and tender. Lady D. showed me a letter he had given to her man-servant to give her in the event of his sudden death. You never saw anything more touching. He said, "Dr. Brown has told me I may die suddenly, and therefore there may be no time for parting words, and besides, this would be painful to us both," and then he states in the simplest, strongest words what she had been to him during their long union,—“you have been my comfort and my strength all my life.”

But I must end. I do hope you will come down.—  
Yrs. ever,

J. BROWN.

## CVI. To JAMES CRUM

23 RUTLAND STREET, 4th May 1858.

MY DEAR JAMES—I was very glad to get yours; I had been blaming myself for not writing. My father is, I think, really a little better and speaks more hopefully. I would fain get him out the first mild west wind day. I have been very busy somehow or other. I miss my old Lord [Dunfermline] and friend; he was more of a friend than a Lord.

You would have quite liked the old man, sincere, grave, strong-minded, earnest for the real good of the *people*, but quite aware of the *false* good some men try to do them. He was as natural at 83 as he must have been when 8, and passed through this insincere damaging world very little injured.

I was at Melrose for a day and a half, and went up to Newark and Bowhill. Wm. is well and busy; Kitty is away for a week to Polmont—she needed change; Heleny is growing in stature and improving in every way; John is writing away at his Latin, but I don't think he will ever be a scholar—he is more fitted for active, practical life. Alexr. is well, and I believe working well; he passed very honourably.

We had Professor Sellar and his wife (one of the Dennistouns) the other day—very good people. I am wearying to see the house, and feel as if I must run off some day very soon. My love to Madam and yourself.—Yrs. ever,

J. BROWN.

## CVII. To PROFESSOR SELLAR

23 RUTLAND STREET, 13th May 1858.

MY DEAR SIR—Many thanks for these two, *too* kind letters. They gave me more pleasure than perhaps they should, and yet it would be very silly not to say I was pleased. As to the story, one thing makes me not afraid to like its being praised, and that is that it is so entirely and merely *true*, that, as Mrs. Sellar so truly says, it is "Great Nature" not small me, that is to be praised. Give her my best thanks for her letter, for everything in it, but not the least for her "beautiful wife."

Your story of "A", sir, life's fulllll o' sairiousness to him" is perfect, and I mean by your leave to insert it in *Rab*; <sup>1</sup> it

<sup>1</sup> See *Horæ Subsecivæ*, 2nd Series, p. 375.

## Letters of Dr. John Brown [1858]

is so applicable to him. It was to him "the heavy and the weary weight, the burden and the mystery of all his unintelligible world," the not getting "enuff o' fechtin'." I don't know anything finer. . . . Lancaster will have told you that he is to do the Advocate's Bill for the *Scotsman*. I am glad for it, and for him, and for the Bill that it is so. I hope the cloven sable foot, the parson's, will be withdrawn. There is much good, actual, and still more possible, in the Bill. Are you not in a sacred rage at Derby and his crew; what meanness and idiocy! But I fear Lord John will not do the clean thing, go in heart and soul with Palmerston; he is crotchety and *heartless*, I know this—I mean *politically* heartless. What are you doing? and how do you get rid of your energy of brain, heart, and muscle? And is the delightfulest of potato-diggers already digging? She must dig for the entire family of Lagarie;<sup>1</sup> she must peel or scrape them, sitting on a low *creepy*, with her mutch on. She must, however, have washed them previously, stirring them in the old style with a long heather besom; then must she boil and *poor* them, and minister to the Gods herself at dinner. If she does this, then may she know that SYME IS PLEASED! Seriously, make her energeise with her body, and stupefy with her mind to the uttermost, for 3 months. I met Shairp and his wife the night before last at Mr. Erskine's of Linlathen. I like them both very much, but I wish he wanted that Moustache; he is too mild for one. I thought her a gentle, ladylike fine creature.

Mrs. Brown is still at Polmont. I could not resist sending her your (dual) letters. My best regards to Mrs. Sellar and her sine quâ non.—Yours ever, J. BROWN.

### CVIII. TO JAMES CRUM

13th October [1858], 23 RUTLAND STREET.

MY DEAR JAMES—You would get the telegraph, and know that all was over.<sup>2</sup> He remained quiet all yesterday, grave and humble and thankful, and very tender and sweet to us, but saying little and waiting patiently till his change. His bodily sufferings ended last night about 9. Gourlay and

<sup>1</sup> The reference is to Mrs. Sellar's old home, and to Professor Syme's recommendation of open-air exercise.

<sup>2</sup> Dr. Brown's father died on October 13.

## 1858] Letters of Dr. John Brown

Alexander and I laid him in bed, and so still was he and so free from the desire to move that he remained in the exact position, even his hands, till after death. He fell asleep at  $\frac{1}{2}$  past 10, and I remained till near 12. Isabella lay down and slept, and he did not change till about 8 [A.M.]. I saw him then, and he died quite gently at  $\frac{1}{2}$  past 9. He composed his face and shut his eyes and his firm, resolved, and sweet mouth, and died at once, looking very beautiful; all the marks and lines of anguish and uneasiness and care went away, and his face as it were opened out. He was so like Maggy. Isabella and the children stand it well. Janet and Kitty were with them, and John Cairns stayed all night, but had to leave in the morning. Before going, my father looked—for he could hardly speak—his farewell and his blessing, and when asked how he was, he said in his own measured, decided way, “*Wonderfully well*,” as if he had a double meaning in it. The funeral will not be this week, of course—probably on Monday, when you can come. We will all be glad to see you. He will be put in his coffin to-morrow night at 8, but it will not be closed then, you and Mrs. Crum might like to see his face, he had a *quite peculiar* love for you both.

Many thanks for your letter this afternoon. Our regards to you both.—Yrs. ever affectly., J. BROWN.

### CIX. TO THE SAME

23 RUTLAND STREET, 16th Octr. 1858.

MY DEAR JAMES—I should have written sooner, but have had many things to do, and often wished you were beside me, to advise and regulate. Isabella is well, all but her finger, which is suppurating. We are all, as he said, “wonderfully well”; we don’t know yet how we are. The kindness of friends, the strange sort of exalted state of mind, the acknowledgment of his greatness and worth from every one, keep us in a sort of state that is both natural and not. The coffin was fixed down last night. The funeral is to be on Wednesday at 2, the near personal friends, who will fill the house, coming at  $\frac{1}{2}$  past 1. The congregation is to meet in Nicolson St. Chapel (Dr. Johnston’s) and join the funeral. The “Sons of the Clergy,” of which Society he was the President, the Students, Rose Street people, the City Missionaries, etc., will arrange with Mr. Scott the undertaker how to fall in. What I have said to every one, is what I

## Letters of Dr. John Brown [1858]

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## 1858] Letters of Dr. John Brown

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## Letters of Dr. John Brown [1858

know was *his* way of thinking: *Our* funeral is private and personal, but we cannot object, but the reverse, to others joining it, and accompanying us, with as little ostentation as is possible. I have had many letters, some of which you would like to see, one beautiful one from his old friend Principal Lee. John Cairns has written a short estimate of his character and his position in the world for the *Scotsman* of Monday first. It is very noble, something I am sure you will like, simple, broad, strong, affectionate, and true; and I will append to it the facts of his life, which have been given most inaccurately by almost every one. William saw him last night; I mean, saw my father's face, before the coffin was shut; poor fellow, we were very sorry he could not get in before.

I hope you will be in an hour or 2 before  $\frac{1}{2}$  past 1. I fear many omissions may have been made, but we have done all we could.—Yours ever affectionately, J. BROWN.

### CX. TO LADY TREVELYAN

23 RUTLAND STREET, 17th November 1858.

MY DEAR LADYSHIP—Where are you? . . . We were both of us so comforted by your kind—so very kind and *understanding* letter about my father. I feel his death more and more, and would be sorry if I didn't; it meets me everywhere, and now that I can never go to him I am for ever wishing to consult him. Very strangely, his old and especial friend Dr. Henderson<sup>1</sup> died the week after him. I send you a notice I wrote of him; he was as much, indeed more, than I have called him, and if he had been a Bishop instead of Seceding Minister his Sermons would have been Classical. I hope you have been gaining strength. My poor Kitty has been confined to bed for nearly a week with intense pain, . . . but to-day I like her look better; she got no good at Melrose, she needs high *wild* air—and we must feu a bit of ground from Sir Walter close by the Gibbet and in view of the Cheviots. The Book is fairly launched. I have not sent you a copy for the excellentest and shabbiest of reasons that I am bent on making money by it! I gave the future Mistress of Bath House one for selfish purposes, and as a marriage portion! It seems as if it were going to do; 500 of the 1000 are off in a week. How much is the half of 950 six-and-fivepences? Are you not coming down for a month or a couple of them this

<sup>1</sup> Rev. James Henderson, D.D., Galashiels.

# 1858] Letters of Dr. John Brown

spring or winter? Do. When you have time let me hear from you. Kitty sends her love. She thought it so kind and dear in you writing her as you did.—Yours and Sir Walter's ever affectionately,  
J. BROWN.

## CXI. To JAMES CRUM

*31st Decr. 1858, 23 RUTLAND STREET.*

MY DEAR JAMES—A good and happy new year to my Two Friends. May they have more means of doing good this 1859 than in all the years before it! It has been a sad year to us all, and to you and her not least. He who had the most to suffer, and through whom we all suffered, and whom we must never hope not to miss, is now beyond all pain. I am more sorry than I can tell, at not getting back; I had set my heart on it. What I most wanted was to see the Limekilns people and to drive up to Eaglesham, and have a quiet Sabbath day with you. I hope I will find Kitty has come back better than she went. Tell all the Busby gathering that they must be very active in pitying me. Wish them all a happy new year.—. . . Yrs. and Mater's ever affectly. and gratefully,  
J. BROWN.

## CXII. To HIS SON JOHN

*January 1859.*

MY OWN DEAR JOHN—A good new year and a happy to you, and may you be busier and stronger and happier this year 1859 than you have ever been. I am wearying to hear of all your doings on Wednesday, what you and Marion made of yourselves, and all your fun. . . . I have got a book with capital stories in it; when you come back, and if you are diligent and within 15 of the top, I will get it for you to read. Tell Alexander I wish him a happy new year. This past year has been a very sad one to us all, but he who had the worst of it, Grandpapa, is happy now. That thin, wasted, suffering face is now in the grave, but he who lived in that body and looked out at those eyes, which were his windows, is blessed for ever, no more pain. I daresay he sometimes thinks of you, for he loved you very much, and prays God to do you, and to make you, good. Good-bye, my dear boy.—  
Your own old

PA-  
PA-  
SI.

Master JOHN BROWN, Sextus.



# Letters of Dr. John Brown [1859

## CXIII. To JAMES CRUM

23 RUTLAND STREET, EDINBURGH, 24th Jany. '59.

MY DEAR JAMES—That is a noble speech of William Thomson's, so like himself. I have sent it to Thackeray. You may well be all proud of him.

You will be like so many notables all over the country, and indeed the world, preparing to be delivered of your word upon Burns just 100 years after his mother was about to be of him. It is in some ways the most remarkable demonstration about one man the world has ever seen. Do you know Mr. Stevens' story of his father when a boy and living next farm to Burns' father, seeing Gilbert and Robert *howkin'* a big hole in a field. The boy, looking on, said, "Robbie, what ir ye doin'?" "Howkin' this hole, ma man." "What for?" "To bury the Deil in, Davie." On which Davie wondered and said, with much seriousness, "A' but, Robbie, hoo'r ye to get him in?" On which "Robbie" laughed loud and long, and turned round to his brother and said, "Aye, Gibbie, hoo'r we to set him in!" and all the day through he was stopping and repeating, "Aye, hoo'r we to get him in?" You as wild humour about catchin' the Deil and putting him in that hole.—Yrs. ever, J. B.

## CXIV. To HIS SISTER ISABELLA

11th Feby. 1859, 23 RUTLAND STREET.

MY DEAR ISABELLA—I am very glad you and Janet are to stay another week; it will do you both good. Busby is a wonderful Cordial and Restorative. Be sure and go some day to the Rookan.

I send you John Cairns' letter. I quite agree with him that he and I must not try a *duet*. It would be like an Elephant and our Dick walking arm-in-arm. He would stoop and I would stretch, to the loss of all dignity. I will, if I can muster heart and spirits for it, give him a letter to put in the appendix.

Kitty bids me send her love, and her thanks to Janet for her letter, which she liked not a little. She is not at all well, and her pain and inability mar all her attempts at work; it is no easy matter to suffer and be unable to do anything else.

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Tell Uncle James, if he wants a book to read aloud to you, and he is a capital public Reader as well as a capital a good many other things, to get *Adam Bede* and read it to you.—Yrs. ever,  
J. B.

CXV. TO JAMES CRUM

*Tuesday Evening, 1859.*

MY DEAR JAMES—Thanks for your two letters and the *Mail*; it was sharp but not undeserved. I assure you the country will need all the sound and *big* heads in it, for we are in the *rapids*, and may be over Niagara before we know where we are. This household franchise and ballot are not needed, and are perilous experiments, like yoking unbroken horses into the Coach and making them the *leaders*. It is all *stuff* the right every man has to have a vote; there is no absolute *right* in the matter; in such an artificial state as our society is in, the thing is mainly what is safe. The Ballot I have always disliked; it is making a man do in political matters what he would scorn (or should) to do in any others; it presupposes that his vote may do him mischief; and then after all, and the best thing for it, is that it never can secure secrecy in the long run. . . . Nothing shows more the increase of liberality and knowledge among the landed gentry in England than the return of so many new Liberal members. This is the legitimate, practical way to make the tenants liberal; for a landlord always must and *should* influence the political opinions and conduct of his tenants. Free Trade has done much of this converting the Lairds.

CXVI. TO THE REV. DR. JOHN CAIRNS

23 RUTLAND STREET, EDINBURGH, *2d April* [1859].

MY DEAR FRIEND— . . . My object in now writing is to give you a passage from Isaac Taylor's *Saturday Evening* which was in my mind when I wrote the *Scotsman* paragraph, but which perhaps you may like to see entire. It is very beautiful in word as well as in thought.

“There is a serenity, might we say a *lentitude* of the physical temperament, there is a native translucency of mind, there is a correct keeping of time, a rhythm and melody in the movements of the passions, there is a steady, tranquil flight of the fancy, and there is a habit of abstraction (not

## Letters of Dr. John Brown [1859]

philosophical but imaginative) which, altogether, supply to the mind that combines them, a far higher and more constant happiness than is ever, even under the most favourable circumstances, to be drawn from the ordinary external sources of pleasure. The man of meditation is happy, not for an hour or a day, but quite round the circle of his years."—*Saturday Evening*, page 270.

I wish I could find time to run out to you. I think I could do you far more good in a couple of hours' talk about the Memoir, than in any other way. We have very good accounts of Kitty; she has now been 6 days at B. R.<sup>1</sup> and is already the better for it, in spite of this terrific weather.—Yours and my Aunt's ever truly, J. BROWN.

### CXVII. TO LADY TREVELYAN

BEN RHYDDING, *Monday* [1859].

DEAR LADY TREVELYAN—I came here on Saturday night and I know you will be glad to hear that I found Mrs. Brown *really better*—looking fresher, healthier, *safer* than for two years. I hope a real recovery is begun, and that she will be, as she has not been for 7 years. It was such a happiness to see her so decidedly better—not that she is by any means free of pain, or even stronger, but she has a look as if her central life was better. This is a lovely dale and the place far pleasanter and *sensibler* than I somehow expected. I would like to have a month myself of its douches and all its Victimisations, and the Dr. is a hearty and kind-hearted, natural man, jovial and full of briskness, and just enough of an oddity to be what Lord Cockburn called *curious*. If you know the place you will remember the fine wild broken hill crest of "the Cow and the Calf"—that is the daily wandering place of the water people.

To-day Kitty and I drove down to Farnley Hall. We got in readily, but Mr. Fawkes was not in. I don't think I ever enjoyed anything more than that place. These 3 rooms! I was amazed at the two figure pictures by Turner—one in oil, Rembrandt's daughter, and the other in water, of a girl and boy and hen and chickens with such a cockiest of gamecocks in the front. If he had gone into this line, he would have been as much above Wilkie as Shakespeare is above Oliver Goldsmith or Sir Walter Scott. That great, fresh piece of

<sup>1</sup> Ben Rhydding.

1859]      Letters of Dr. John Brown

the world, "Dort," you remember it, above the mantelpiece? and did you see Mr. Fawkes' portrait by himself (I mean by Mr. Fawkes) of Turner, the most wonderful guy, and such power and insight in spite of its utter look of the oldest of clothesmen? We went afterwards to see Mr. Fawkes' Bulls and calf Bulls and heifers, and one fine decayed old gentlewoman 20 years of age called Fairy tale (or tail). You, I know, have been in the house. We both thought it had much the air somehow of Wallington, a place to live in. We did not see the Rhine drawings, as Mr. F. never lets any see them without being with them. I return to-morrow, and to my sorrow whisk past Morpeth before dawn I suppose; I must be in Edinburgh by 9 on Wednesday morning.—Good-bye; Mrs. Brown bids me send her best love. . . . Our regards to Sir Walter. There is immense excitement, to-morrow being the West Riding poll. Mr. F., I see, is as true an Old Whig as he is a lover of Art and of Bulls.—Yours ever,  
J. BROWN.

Where have I seen an account of the Farnley Turners? didn't John Ruskin write about them, and where?

CXVIII. TO THE REV. DR. JOHN CAIRNS

23 RUTLAND STREET, EDINBURGH, 21st June 1859.

MY DEAR FRIEND—I have not written any of my letter to you, but have thought it over, and when the pressure is applied could readily write it. I was thinking of making it a record of such *personal* matters about not only my father but the Browns, John of Haddington, my Grandfather, Uncle Ebenezer, and the others, John B. Patterson among them, as could not suitably come in in your narrative. It will not be long, but would go somewhat minutely into my father's personal and private character; but of course all this will come before you and you will deal with it Rhadamantuously. Love to Aunt and yourself.—Yours ever  
J. BROWN.

# Letters of Dr. John Brown [1859]

## CXIX. To JAMES CRUM

COBLENTZ, 14th August 1859,  
HOTEL OF THE GIANTS-YOU-WOT-OF.

MY DEAR JAMES—Here we are ! safe and sound, Madam a good deal tired with our travelling, but sustained by astonishment and delight, and the soft air. We are very comfortable as well as magnificent here, and have no reason to regret our giving up the White Horse at the other end of the bridge ; only last night we did hardly sleep a wink, as the Military seemed embarking and disembarking all the night, all the dogs barking and the men whistling and shouting and banging their sticks about. We thought it might be the Giant and his family out for a lark ! We left for York on Tuesday at 6 P.M., got there at 2 A.M., slept till 8, met the Maitlands and got to Hull and embarked on the *Sea Gull* at 3 and got off before 5. It was very pleasant down the Humber, the sun setting gloriously and the moon rising modestly, and we were flattering ourselves much. BUT when we came to the open sea, we were all more or less ill, Kitty in bed, but not very ill, I pretty well when flat, Jean very ill, Alexr. do. and Miss Maitland do., and the Solicitor-General dreadful. We got to Rotterdam on Thursday before 5 ; you know the place. I like it and the people, and indeed all I saw of Holland. Even the crows are fat, and the Nettles hardly sting or are too lazy to do it. We shot past Gouda, regretting we could not see the old glass. We got to Cologne on the Friday night by rail from Rotterdam. The Maitlands were going this way and we were pressed for time, besides the only boats were said to be very uncomfortable and crowded. I enjoyed looking at all the strange things. We got to Cologne, or rather Deutz, about 9, and put up at your Hotel, the Bellevue—excellent. We men took a walk across the bridge in the moonlight, the moon looking straight down the river. He is a great fellow the Rhine, and the pace at which he goes *always* is amazing. When you see his smooth face it looks still, but how it frets and rages about the boats at the bridge ; and there is a bath *here* at the bridge where I mean to go to-day. Mr. Maitland was in it. It is a cage in which, as he says, he struggles with the Rhine, and through which the fish go. Mrs. Brown has been very bad each night, but I think better in spite of everything, only quite unable to see places as she would if well. We go to-morrow to

## 1859] Letters of Dr. John Brown

Frankfort to see Dr. Spiess, and whatever he says we should, we will, do. Mr. and Miss Maitland go to him also, and likely to Schwalbach. He and she have been great comforts. He is our commodore, and a very excellent and considerate man, after your heart, careful and generous in one. She is *very* good and funny and clever, and she and Alexr. do the German, though we are all at it; I find it much easier than French, and I don't haggle at the pronunciation. . . . Jean is well and happy, Alexr. do. and do., and *very useful*, and Mr. Maitland likes him *very* much; he is growing his beard! . . . I do hope this will do Mrs. Brown real good; I will be very anxious about her this winter if it does not. . . . How much the being here and having to go back, and *not* go and see him, brings painfully close my father's death! I hope you are really well and taking some care of yourself. The heat here to-day is very great. Good-bye, and remember me to you all. —Yrs. ever affectly. and gratefully, J. BROWN.

I was disappointed in Cologne Domkirche; it is not only unfinished, but it is a confused-looking place. I prefer York greatly. We saw the 11,000 Virgins' bones, at least more than enough of them, though, from some leg and thigh-bones I saw, some of them must have been Grenadiers, or, as Mr. Maitland surmised, Frederick the Great's bodyguard. . . .

### CXX. TO HIS SISTERS

LANGEN SCHWALBACH, *August 19th* [1859].

MY DEARS JANET AND ISABELLA—Here we are at last. We came last night from Frankfort. Kitty is far from well to-day, but already feels the good of the delightful place, high, pure hill air, a simple, homely, beautiful place, without the splendour or gaiety or wickedness of Ems and Homburg. Think of a Jewess last week at Homburg winning £16,000. There is no gaming here. . . . Jean is very happy, and has fallen in love with an Austrian Archduke, whom she saw at a grand night procession of Cavalry, each warrior holding a flaming torch; it was for the Emperor's birthday, and in the long high main street in Frankfort made a very striking spectacle. The Archduke is about 18, fair and beardless, and gave one fatal look to the window where was Jean.

The Dr. (Dr. Spiess) is the son of a Calvinistic minister

## 1859] Letters of Dr. John Brown

and explaining how long ago it was,—before the new art criticism was begun; and I would tell that odd story of Hugh Miller sending me the £20 as I was sitting dull and penniless in London Street, and my horror and despair, and Kitty's grabbing the money and saying I must write. Very likely if she had not done so I would have never written a word. The second Edition will be out soon. I am only writing a short addendum to the Preface.

As to the Second Series, I am frightened to think of it. At present what I think of are Dr. Chalmers, Vaughan, Bits of Ruskin, Guy Patin and Dr. Davidson, Presence of Mind and Happy Guessing in Medicine, John Scott (Kitty's uncle), a sketch with letters of Mackintosh, Chas. Lamb, Hazlitt, Romilly, and Brougham, Thoughts on the kind of Certainty to be promised and expected from such an art as Medicine, the *Witness* Bits, and some other odds and ends, for remembering which I will trust a good deal to you.

We are in the middle of a contest about Lord Brougham for Chancellor. I am, of course, for the old Giant; the Duke of Buccleuch is the other, and to-day we hear of Lord John that worthy Marplot.

We all send our much love.

J. B.

It is to be regretted that Dr. Brown did not carry out his intention of writing a paper on John Scott, the uncle of Mrs. Brown, as it would have added an interesting chapter to literary history. Scott was a school-fellow of Byron in Aberdeen, and in later life they met in Venice. As editor of the *Champion* and the *London Magazine*, Scott was brought into contact with the most distinguished men of letters of the time, some of whom became his intimate friends. It was in the *London Magazine* that the *Essays of Elia* made their appearance. In 1815 he published *A Visit to Paris in 1814*, and in 1816 *Paris Revisited*. In *The Newcomes* Clive says of both of these works that "they are famous good reading," and of *Paris Revisited*, Wordsworth, who was on intimate terms with Scott, expresses his high opinion. Byron had an equally high respect for the talents of his school-fellow, and Bishop Heber adjudged him to be "decidedly the ablest of the Weekly Journalists." Scott's tragic end in a duel (1821) is well known.

## Letters of Dr. John Brown [1859]

### CXXII. To JOHN TAYLOR BROWN

6th December [1859].

MY DEAR JOHN—Many thanks for your two letters. . . . I *am* pleased, very, about Gladstone, as it came to me so *cleanly*,<sup>1</sup> I believe chiefly through James Moncreiff and Edward Maitland. It no way trammels me, as I represent only myself in the Court. Gladstone is to be down to constitute and preside at the Court on Monday first. I am vexed you didn't get down this year; the year feels wrong without having seen you. I am busy, and in many ways prospering, but all is darkened and embittered by Kitty's state of health, weaker, thinner than ever, and her nervous system shattered with long pain. God knows how it is to end. Logan, Hill, and all your old friends are well, and we often speak of you. I assure you, my dear, dear John, the way you speak in your last makes me very happy, and even more ashamed. I have been looking over the *Witness* papers<sup>2</sup> at your suggestion, and am surprised at the pith of some of them, and I think it very likely that a selection from them may be printed with a bit of apology, and the queer story of the £20 and Hugh Miller's letter.

12,000 of *Rab* are gone. Surely I should get 12,000 pence for my share.

Kitty sends her love. Nelly and Jock are getting big and old, Nelly older by 4 years than her Mother when I first fell in love with her. Write me soon.—Yrs. ever,

J. BROWN.

### CXXIII. To COVENTRY DICK

23 RUTLAND STREET, 11th December [1859].

MY DEAR COVENTRY—I think I must come down to Rothesay some Saturday. It is the only way for me to get all myself out to you. Gladstone came last night with his Colleague the Duke of Argyll, and I am to see him first to-morrow at Dean Ramsay's, where he is living, and to-morrow at one he constitutes his Court, and we elect our

<sup>1</sup> When Lord Rector of Edinburgh University, Mr. Gladstone twice appointed Dr. Brown as his Assessor in the University Court.

<sup>2</sup> These were included as "Notes on Art" in the 2nd Series of *Horæ Subsecivæ*, which was at this time in preparation.



## 1859] Letters of Dr. John Brown

3 Curators according to the Lord Justice Clerk's foolishness of Bills. We are in great debate with each other whether we should choose them from ourselves entirely, or from without, or from both quarters. . . . It is funny enough Gladstone's nominating me, his antipodes exactly. I am, however, in no way bound to him, but represent myself. Maitland is as incorruptible and disputatious as of old. He is very much better in health, and full of work.

. . . I am going to put together another volume of *Horæ*. I don't know if I am right, but the publishers are urgent. . . . As for another *Rab*, that, I fear, is impossible. I cannot feign these things; I must tell them as they happened. But I must end. I will go on now, having begun.

Our best regards to you and your sister.—Yours ever affectionately,  
J. BROWN.

## 1860-1869

In 1861 the Second Series of *Horæ Subsecivæ* was published. It was warmly received both in this country and in America. But the pleasure this would have brought to Dr. Brown was darkened as he saw the gradual lessening of his wife's strength, and her increasing inability to share with him all that had made life vivid to them both. For years he watched, as only a husband and a doctor could watch, the gradual fading, vanishing of her whole self. He went his daily rounds, interested himself in the joys and sorrows of his friends and patients as of old, and at times he was persuaded to go from home. In the summer of 1861 he went for a short tour in Ireland. But however he was employed, there was always in his thoughts a sad background, this darkened home. Mrs. Brown died on January 6, 1864; and before long his own health broke down. He could not bear the responsibility of his profession, and for a short time he had to leave Edinburgh. But in a few months he was again able to resume work.

In 1866 his only daughter was married and went to live in Ireland. It was now that his sister, "the faithful Isabella," as he somewhere calls her, came to take charge of his household, which she continued to do through all the following years. His only son never left the old home.

## Letters of Dr. John Brown [1860

At this period of his life Dr. Brown was greatly indebted to the unfailing friendship of Mr. and Mrs. George Barclay. Mr. Barclay was a friend of early days, and delights still to remember that he was the first to draw Dr. Brown's attention to Thackeray's earliest contributions to *Fraser's Magazine*; and that he suggested to Dr. Brown "that he might make something of *Marjorie Fleming's Journal*." We know what he did make of it.

The Barclay family spent each summer out of Edinburgh, and after 1866 very often chose their country residence with a view to Dr. Brown's pleasure and convenience. Before returning to Rutland Street in the late autumn of that year, he went to the Riviera with Mr. Barclay and his brother Dr. Charles Barclay, and some of the letters which follow were written during this tour. He made a final visit to the Continent, again in company with some of the Barclay family, in 1868. No scenery satisfied him so fully as the grim Bens, the purple moors, the rivers, the quiet grassy hills, and "burns" of his native land.

After this date in his letters, especially in those to intimate friends, there are passages full of sadness, of reiterated self-condemnation which are painful to read, and would be misleading to print; they would give the impression of a darker life than was really his. The mystery of sorrow and suffering weighed heavily upon him, and his own shortcomings and "sin" loomed large, but even at the darkest, he never doubted, as he once impressively said, that, "God must have depths of light yet to reveal to account for the shadows here."

### CXXIV. To JOHN DOWNES

23 RUTLAND STREET, EDINBURGH, *Sunday* [1860].

MY DEAR DOWNES<sup>1</sup>—Thanks very much for your welcome note. *Parvula* has got Hooping-cough, but not seriously. She is plainly disgusted in some obscure way at your absence. The *Sine quâ non* bears up wonderfully, but is dull enough I am sure; she and I abuse you cordially for leaving Edin-

<sup>1</sup> John Downes, M.A., Examiner in Mental Philosophy in Edinburgh University, 1862. The *sine quâ non* and *parvula* referred to were Mr. Downes' wife and daughter.

burgh; you must either come back to us or carry her and *Parvula* off. You said nothing about your health. What of it? I am glad the Megalander<sup>1</sup> was kindly. I knew he would be. I forgot altogether to give you a note to Dallas;<sup>2</sup> would you still like one? The *Saturday* is by no means *very* bilious, and it pleases me their putting so much in about my father, though they rather muddle the old man's features. If a copy of the 2nd Series is sent to the *Daily News*, will you abuse it there? You might make a very good paper for the *Cornhill* by taking up old Carlyle and Somerville and my father as types of Scotsmen.

I am very dull, somehow out of spirits and the pump off the fang. Here is a story for Masson when you see him. A parish fool was crossing an upland moor and was observed by a shepherd going and kneeling behind a fail-dyke. The shepherd crept up to the other side and heard Jock Gray howling out a desperate confession of his depravity, ending with, "And, O Lord, if ye were to gar this fail-dyke fa' this very moment and smoor me, it wad be nae mair than I deserve,"—upon which the shepherd sent it over upon him. He got up in a fury, all over stour, and yelled out, "A gey-like world this, whan a body canna say a thing in joke but it's ta'en up in airnest,"—applicable to many prayers. Let me hear from you now and then, and tell me if I can do anything useful. You must be very well pleased at your reception. Your great fault is not a common one: you are "ower blate."—Yours ever,

J. BROWN.

#### CXXV. TO HIS BROTHER WILLIAM

[July 1860.]

I am begun to an attempt to write a letter to Dr. Cairns on my father. It is very difficult, but I think I see my way through it. I want to give examples of that strange union of solidity and perseverance with intensity and impetuosity. I always think of him as *thoroughbred*, as we speak of a horse, full of fire and of endurance—"bottom" too. His primary qualities were, I think—

1. *Love of truth*, of reality, of getting close to, and into the essence of everything he set himself to.

2. *Persistency*, keeping at a thing and subduing it, so that if once done, it was done for ever.

<sup>1</sup> Thackeray.

<sup>2</sup> Author of *The Gay Science*, and a well-known critic.

## Letters of Dr. John Brown [1860

3. *Intensity*, a certain compactness of mental action, a concentration of force in look, action, and expression, the putting the whole of himself into whatever he said or thought or did, and a keenness and quickness of saying or doing what he had made up his mind to.

4. *Greatness, and purity of Motive*, no littleness or doubtfulness of the why he did anything. This removed him out of all small party or personal intrigues. These, with strong but suppressed affection, were among his chief characteristics.

### CXXVI. TO THE REV. DR. JOHN CAIRNS

23 RUTLAND STREET, 27th August [1860].

MY DEAR FRIEND—It is not that I have not been feeling the misery of not having done what I promised, and feeling, too, your kindness, and I may say magnanimous good-nature, that you have not heard before this. But I wished to be able to say that I had begun, and yesterday and to-day I have written 28 large Quarto pages, and feel as if I would assuredly finish it in a day or two. It is, I fear, very little what you might expect, or wish, but such as it is I will send it to you in a first proof—you couldn't read my MS.—with which you *must* take all possible liberties. Mr. Douglas thinks it should be published at once, of the type and size of the Memoir, so as to bind up with it, and be issued as a supplementary chapter, with a note from me stating that it was no one's blame but mine that it did not appear with it, and that any deficiency of personal detail, which I do not acknowledge, in your to me most wonderful work of mind and heart, is owing entirely to my not fulfilling my promise.

Mrs. Brown is at Blairgowrie with the children and *very* well. I am better than for years. It is as if a great cloud was lifted away. May I make God's use of His great mercy. My love to Aunty and to the beloved Philip.<sup>1</sup>—Yours and your Sister's ever truly,  
J. BROWN.

### CXXVII. TO THE SAME

WESTER KINLOCH, BLAIRGOWRIE, 7th Sept. [1860].

MY DEAR FRIEND—I had hoped to see you and taken your hand, when you were in Arthur Lodge, and little thought

<sup>1</sup> Dr. Philip Maclagan of Berwick, brother of Sir Douglas Maclagan and the Archbishop of York.

## 1860] Letters of Dr. John Brown

my first words with you would be of such sudden and great sorrow as you now are all in. A Mother's death, and such a Mother's, is a loss there are no words for; indeed we hardly know how deep it goes, much less can we express it. I had hoped also to see her whose wise, truthful, affectionate, and truly great face I saw almost every day in that wonderful photograph. I used to think that such a face could not but have sent out into this strange world's work the very sons and daughters she did. To *you*, this will be of all the children the greatest and deepest sorrow, and want. May God, who gave her to you and gave you to her, comfort and help you, and be thankful you had her so long and were so daily and hourly with her. I lost my mother 44 years ago and have never ceased to feel her loss. The world would have been a very different one to me, and I a very different one to it, had it pleased God to spare her to me as long as your Mother has been. Take Mrs. Brown's and my best sympathy to yourself and all yours, and believe me, yours ever affectionately,

JOHN BROWN.

### CXXVIII. TO HIS BROTHER WILLIAM

8th September 1860, WESTER KINLOCH, BLAIRGOWRIE.

MY DEAR WILLIAM—Thanks very much for your kind and comforting letter, for it is a comfort to get your words of approval. I find it so very difficult to know what to do. I think you will like the next bit about Uncle Johnston and my father riding. Be sure and mark all the things and help me as much as you can. I wrote last night 18 quarto pages on "Our Dogs," doing Toby and Adam Cairns' dog, or rather bitch. To-day I will do the royal Wasp and Duchie. I have finished an absurd sort of thing called "The Mystery of Black and Tan, or the Vestiges of the Natural History of the Creation of a Terrier," with a new reading of *de cespite vivo*. I don't know if you will like it. It took my fancy, and gives me a chance of a good-humoured bit of banter upon Darwin's stuff of natural selection. I have a very urgent invitation from Sir James Clark to go next week to Birkhall, along with Christison and Syme. It is a great temptation, but I am very useful and happy here. Kitty is *very* well, but subject to depression, and is really the better of me, and the happiness of being with her and the children is something to be more than usually grateful to God for. I go into Edinburgh

## Letters of Dr. John Brown [1860

on Tuesday, and come back as soon as I can. Write me soon. You would see Mrs. Cairns is dead, as you feared. Good-bye; all send love to you, Maggy, and the children.  
...—Yours,  
J. B.

### CXXIX. TO THE REV. DR. JOHN CAIRNS

23 RUTLAND STREET, EDINBURGH, 23rd Novr. [1860].

MY DEAR FRIEND—Thanks; the difficulty as to softening expression is that these manifestations of my father's *tragic* conditions<sup>1</sup> (for they were not less than this) were quite as strong as could be any words. Everything about him was so keen, so full of sensation, and when he did express (which was very rarely) his inmost mind, nothing I could write would be so strong as his words. But I will try and modify, as I all along felt this is the difficulty and the danger of doing anything more than you did. Once into the inner life and where are you to stop? . . . I am frightened now at the quantities of names of Authors I have put in. They are not put down at random, and all tell upon his character, but if you feel them oppressive or absurd or useless, draw your pen through them. I would like now to have it out next week.—Yours ever affectly.,  
J. BROWN.

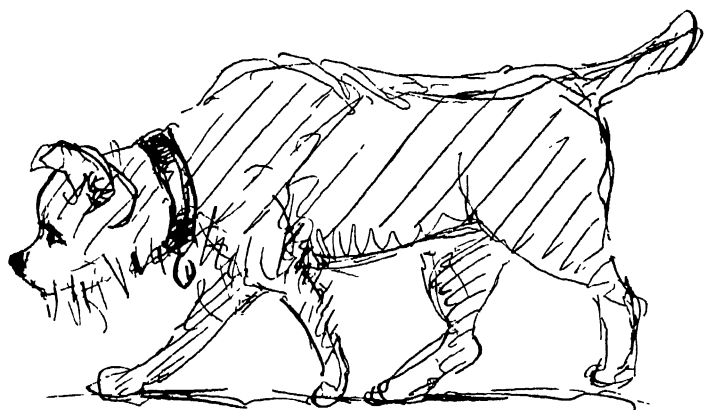
### CXXX. TO LADY TREVELYAN

23 RUTLAND STREET, Saty. Evening [1861].

MY DEAR LADY TREVELYAN—I would have liked to have been next door to you when I got your kind letter to tell you exactly what came into my mind; I don't know that I was ever more pleased, or more ashamed, than when I put down your letter. I quite agree with you about the pathological bit being better out, and so out it is. I will make it better when I get it into type; it is odd that I never know how anything I do is to look and sound till I get it printed. Your scene—the winter morning sunrise coming up from the dreary sea and skirting the hills—is exactly the scene I had fixed on;<sup>2</sup> I wish you would sketch, never mind how roughly, your idea of it. I feel as if you felt it quite, and unless it is felt it can't be done. I want Noel Paton to do the dead old

<sup>1</sup> The allusion is to his father's highly-strung temperament and his habit of overtaxing his strength.

<sup>2</sup> For Illustrated Edition of *Rab*.



SKETCHES BY DR. JOHN BROWN.





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woman in bed, and Mrs. B.,<sup>1</sup> Rab keeping guard at the foot of the bed and the room very dark, and perhaps my feet seen to show somebody else—but merely the feet. Then I am for George Harvey giving Rab dead in the stable, grand and at rest, with the furniture of the old stable. William Hunt would do it, would he not? what a stable-boy that is of his, and indeed his everything. Then I want Mrs. B. to do a Carrier's cart from life, with Jess and Rab, and Jeems (who always wore a double-breasted red waistcoat with sleeves and no coat), and the hencoop at the back of the cart with the inquisitive and doomed fowls poking out. This would suit her desperately realistic turn, and if you give us that eerie morning then will the plates prevent *Rab* being dished, as I daresay I may have already facetiously said. I am so grieved at what you say of yourself and what I infer from your going to the garden in a Bath chair. I am very sorry for you—it is so unlike you and must try you; but I suppose that is the *therefore*—we get the things we least can bear. Do you get up to Breakfast? you shouldn't. Have you any one to take the weights of housekeeping and the entertainment of men and women and beasts off you a little? I think I must write to the Cambo Doctor and ask the true state of the case. . . . I hope you will keep to your purpose of coming with Sir Walter.—Yours and his ever, J. BROWN.

CXXXI. TO HIS SISTER JANE

KILLARNEY, *Sunday* [18th August 1861].

MY DEAR JANE—Here we are on the wettest of wet Sundays, and for wetness commend me to Irish wetness, thorough and hopeless as their rags. But we have enjoyed ourselves very much,—Mr. Harvey delicious, Dr. Hanna delightful, Constable capital. What a night we have had—howling and whistling and pelting. We are in the Lake Hotel. We came yesterday from Glengariff by Kenmare—a grand wild mountain road. Glengariff and Kenmare are on arms, or rather fingers, of the sea. We are on the whole disappointed with the Lakes, but then we may be said not to have seen them yet, except the upper one, which is exceedingly shabby and poverty-stricken. We remain here to-day, and go to-morrow to Limerick, and then to Galway. We railed it from Belfast to Cork in one day—raining throughout.

<sup>1</sup> Mrs. Blackburn, wife of Dr. Hugh Blackburn, Professor of Mathematics in the University of Glasgow.

## Letters of Dr. John Brown [1861

Cork we enjoyed—its Cove, its queer folk, its pigs and their drivers, its butter, the Bells and steeple of Shandon. Next day we drove up the valley of the Lee to such a dear little unsophisticated village called Inchigeela,—just a place to stay in and sketch and joke and sleep and eat for a fortnight. Our inn was a one-storied thatched cottage, called of course a Hotel, clean and just on the street, in which are perpetually the people and their pigs, or rather the pigs and their people, for really the people seem more made for the pigs than wicy versa. We then saw the first of the Constabulary, and had a long talk with the Sergeant, and saw all their books and arrangements. Nothing could be better—such a *moral* as well as physical force. Each man, who is dressed in green like a rifleman, and is always a big active fellow, has a little oblong box not much bigger than, and of the shape of, this page,<sup>1</sup> and what do you think is in it? I thought his watch or his book. It is his bracelets of polished steel—his handcuffs. From Inchigeela we came on Friday to Glengariff through a savage but not grand pass called Kimeneigh, and we saw a very wild solitary loch, Gougán Barra, of which I will tell you again, very strange in itself and its relation to the people. It is one of the holy places: and in leaving it we all could not but wish that if these benighted people had too much faith, many of us daylighted folk as we think, though it is often our own paraffine only, would be the better of what they could spare. There are thousands, millions of little stones in the chapel—many cart-loads of them—of thin pebbles, and each represents a prayer. Glengariff is not tide-free as I expected, but is a noble inlet of the Atlantic. The best things we have yet found in Ireland are its butter, its bread, its good-humour and brogue, and its whisky; and what we have seen most of is, children, pigs, potatoes, geese, donkeys, and Irish jinteelity and fun and blundering. The Boots at Glengariff—a woman, very old and queer—engaged to waken us exactly at 7; so a quarter after 7 she comes and asks me what o'clock it was! But they are a fine people,—their women especially, so sweet-eyed and tongued, and gentle and womanly and motherly, and so modest and pure-looking. I bought two collars at Kenmare from three girls, Harvey bought nine, Constable five, and these girls are each as nice and pretty, especially one, as Peg of Limavaddy. . . .

<sup>1</sup> Written with pencil on both sides of seven small slips of ivory paper 3½ × 3 inches, part of a small pocket-book.

## 1861] Letters of Dr. John Brown

I heard yesterday from and of Kitty. Oh, if I could but hope, and sometimes I do in spite of everything. My love to Aunt and yourself. You must always look after me. I shall need it by and by.—Your aff. J. B.

### CXXXII. TO HIS SISTER ISABELLA

KILLARNEY, 19th Aug. [1861].

MY DEAREST ISABELLA—Here we are, having done Belfast, Dublin, Cork, Inchigeela, Glengarriff, Kenmare, and of course all the intervening Ireland. The weather has been baddish, much rain, but we have enjoyed ourselves (that is, literally) very much, such happy good men. Dr. Carlyle didn't come, so that we are just the 4. We spent all Sabbath here, and Dr. Hanna gave us a beautiful paraphrase of the 17th Chapter of John. I got letters from Tummel on Saturday night, as good as I had reason to look for. I hope you are well. I thought you not strong like. The great thing in this country is not the scenery, which is rambling and queer and often very stupid, but the *people*, who are rambling and queer beyond conception, but never stupid or rude or ill-humoured. We go to Limerick to-night, and then on to the wilds of Connemara and home by Belfast. . . . This Lake district is fine, but not so fine to my eye as either the Cumberland or Highland.

Good-bye. You will be all alone at Arthur Lodge. My love to the Youngs and yourself.—Yrs. ever affectionately,  
J. B.

I feel already the better of the change and of the 3 good, kind men.

### CXXXIII. TO LADY MINTO

[The Lady Minto here addressed was the wife of the 3rd Earl of Minto, and daughter of Gen. Sir Thomas Hislop, Bart., G.C.B. In 1861 and 1862 she printed for private circulation a little volume called *Notes from Minto MSS.*; in 1868 she published *A Memoir of the Right Honourable Hugh Elliot*, and this was followed in 1874 by *The Life and Letters of Sir Gilbert Elliot, 1st Earl of Minto*.]

RUTLAND STREET, EDINBURGH, 1st Sept. 1861.

DEAR LADY MINTO—Thanks very much for your gift of the *Notes*. You have much to answer for. I have read nothing else all this day, and found myself scandalising the

## Letters of Dr. John Brown [1861

city quite unconsciously, as I sat in my carriage engrossed utterly by this Elliot world you conjured up before me. It is really well done, no mannishness or "fine writing," no "philosophy," and no sentimentality. It is womanly without being at all womanish, compact in texture, clear and happy in expression. I don't wish *you* to be proud of it, but am sure Lord Minto and the boys and your mother are and ought. It is provokingly short, and leaves the hero and us at the threshold and very soon after breakfast. Why not tell us all his story and finish his day? *In the next edition* you must do this, and give us more of his letters and his mother's and the Countess Thun's (excellent) and Delta's and that odd original Lt.-Col. Petersohn's, with more of your own narrative. I say this quite seriously. What a novel one might write with "le vif et léger Elliot," with his engaging inequalities of nature, his courage, affection, caprice, indolence, and energy, etc., as its hero! What I like so much is your honesty and downrightness, and the entire absence of that stupid enthusiasm and exaggeration about relations so common among women biographers. Am I really to keep it all to myself? May I not let Mrs. Gillies see it? and have you sent a copy to Thackeray? I hope you have. What a "Roundabout paper" he would make of your story. "The Black-eyed Salome" and the English-learning pupil of le bon Lister, with the grammatical Husband (this is an exquisite touch) and all the rifferferie of the Bavarian Court, with Grandfather Hugh, in it all, but not all of it. I don't agree with you and Byron as to Life having no Present, and I do hope you are not right in saying that "even in this world *all* secrets are made known." What a beautiful bit that is about old and present Minto! But I must end though I don't finish. Thank you very cordially for the pleasure you have given me. You took me out of myself, and my present, and even out of my Future, and set me down in the midst of your men and women. . . . Thanks also for your asking me in October and giving me the chance of shaking hands with the new Earl and Countess and my dear friend Lord Amberley. I don't think his Lording will spoil him. My best regards to Lord Minto. Lady Dunfermline is still very far from well, but I hope gaining, not losing. Minnie and her mother are greatly the better of North Berwick. Now seriously, make up your mind to make your *Notes* four times as big. I will ensure you a goodly sum for the 1st public edition.—Yours ever truly,

J. BROWN.

## 1861] Letters of Dr. John Brown

### CXXXIV. TO THE REV. DR. SMITH, BIGGAR

23 RUTLAND STREET, EDINBURGH, 13th Octr. [1861].

MY DEAR UNCLE—I hope nothing will come in the way of the elder branch making its appearance at the great gathering on Tuesday. It is a great delight and pride to us all to know who it is on whom the love and affection and gratitude of a whole countryside, and of us all will then be concentrated. BUT that was a great enormity in you to put my name among the possible speakers, after my quite serious disclaimer of any power in that line. Without joke, I am vexed at this, and the only way to unvex me is to promise, and indeed to promulgate, that I am not to open my mouth. I very nearly asked you to say this very day that Rab's surviving friend was a dumb dog. When we think of this coming day, how immediately we think of those who cannot be there. But they may be there, seeing though invisible. One thing I have of late greatly clung to, and that is, that the Saints may intercede with God through the only Way, for their friends left struggling and wandering behind.

Mrs. Brown is home with us; she is much worse, but I hope not unhappy in body or in mind.—Yours and my Aunt's and all the rest's ever,  
J. BROWN.

The Meeting referred to in the above letter was held in celebration of the Centenary of the Biggar United Presbyterian Church. Though Dr. Brown protests against his name as a speaker being given in the programme, he yielded to persuasion, and on rising was greeted with enthusiasm. He was delighting the audience with memories of his childhood at Biggar, when suddenly the gas was turned on. That moment, and without finishing his sentence, he sat down, and all efforts failed to induce him to begin anew.

### CXXXV. TO HIS BROTHER ALEXR. CRUM BROWN<sup>1</sup>

23 RUTLAND STREET, EDINBURGH, 26th October 1861.

MY DEAR ALEXR.—Thanks for your two notes. I am glad you are comfably settled, and in lodgings. I was always jealous of a family. We go jogging on here. I am

<sup>1</sup> Then at Heidelberg.

## Letters of Dr. John Brown [1861

busy with one thing or other, which is well. Kitty is losing, but not very fast. She is thinner and feebler, and I fear is suffering pain. Nelly is at Millfield. Jane is with us. John gets on very well with Dr. Clyde. The Biggar Centenary was *very* good, all except Dr. —'s belabouring of me with genius, etc., and —'s feeblosities, and Mr. —'s shabby prayer. It was really capital. . . . Aunt James has forced me to submit to a bust by Cauer;<sup>1</sup> it is really distressing the lengths her selfwill is leading her. I suppose you saw or heard of the *Times* upon me! done by Dallas.<sup>2</sup> I have written a notice of Syme's book and Forbes; I will send them to you. I am not in the mood for writing. I *miss you very much*.—Yrs. ever,  
J. B.

### CXXXVI. To MISS JESSIE CRUM

23 RUTLAND STREET, EDINBURGH, 20th Decr. [1861].

MY DEAR JESSIE—Though the Crum hands are all provokingly like, I can (I think) always detect yours; thanks for it.

Yes, this desolation in the poor Queen's house is ours too, and it will do us good. That Sabbath day when we all knew and all sent up earnest prayer to God for her and her children—that spiritual, unselfish act must have done spiritual good to those who prayed and were moved. But we cannot for long tell the full amount of the loss to the country in his loss. He was both true and misunderstood. The Queen had been speaking to Lady John Russell quite lately and saying, "Surely no woman ever had such a husband; he is everything to me."

### CXXXVII. To HIS BROTHER ALEXANDER

23 RUTLAND STREET, EDINBURGH, 27th Decr. 1861.

MY DEAR ALEXR.—Day follows day and never a word do I write to you. I would write longer and more living letters

<sup>1</sup> The photogravure in this book is taken from the bust, of which Dr. Brown says in another letter, "Cauer has made a capital bust of Ego."

<sup>2</sup> The *Times* of Monday, Oct. 21, 1861, has a review of the *Letter to Dr. Cairns*. . . . "When we proceed to analyse it, we are struck by the wonderful effect produced by a succession of trivial details. If we presented any of these details to the reader he would perhaps see nothing in them, and abhor us for trifling with his understanding. It is their combination into a whole, instinct with the author's spirit, that is so effective. Each little bit of the mosaic is nothing, while the compact fabric is perfect."



DR JOHN BROWN

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if I wrote oftener. Kitty is, I fear, losing, but I really cannot tell. I am busy and have had to take another horse to my Brougham. Gladstone is likely coming on the 10th to our Court meeting about selecting New Examiners. . . . I got £105 the other day for my thinnest of *Lay Sermons*,<sup>1</sup> and the last edition of the *Horæ* is sold. I am purposing to sacrifice a half of the 2 Vols. and make one readable, sellable volume. What ones must I sacrifice? Locke and Sydenham, Dr. Marshall and all the quasi-philosophical, the *Excursus Ethicus*, and the *Thorn*, and *Mystifications*. I miss you very much, and pray God to preserve you and bring you back. . . . —Good-bye. Nelly sends her love.—Yrs. ever, J. B.

CXXXVIII. TO SIR THEODORE MARTIN

23 RUTLAND STREET, EDINBURGH, *Sunday Evening*.

MY DEAR THEODORE—Let me thank you with all my heart for your beautiful Catullus. It is as much better than your Horace, as he is deeper, more in earnest, more impassioned, and as you are liker him in all these. Depend upon it you have done nothing so good as this. I gave myself up to it last night, all alone, for some hours, having an old ragged Catullus edited by "*Simone Abbes Gibbima*," and which had belonged to Anna Damer, the aristocratic Sculptor and genius. Atys I knew before; what an orgasm! The song of the Fates is exquisite, and all true; wives and husbands will bless you for the 2 lines beginning, "Round thy strong neck"; and the Notes! quite delicious that from Martial at page 146! Who did the lines on page 152? They are exquisite. But I must not bother you. I rejoice at this illustration of yourself, the same fervour and utter love that you poured out to me many a year ago in walking round and round the Calton Hill, when your dear wife was still unwon, when you were hers, for ever, and you did not dare to think that you were hers. Good-bye, my dear old friend. Thanks to you for this great pleasure. You may now "*dismiss*" when you like; you have got your freehold in perpetuity.—Yours and the sine quâ non's ever affectionately,

J. BROWN.

<sup>1</sup> Dr. Brown's *Plain Words on Health* was first published in *Good Words* under the title of "*Lay Sermons*." See *Horæ Subsecivæ*, 1st Series.

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On his correspondence with Dr. John Brown, Sir Theodore Martin writes as follows :—

“ Dr. Brown was born in September 1810, I in September 1816, and I was surprised when in one of his letters to me he described my dress, when I must have been between 6 and 7 at my first school. How he came to have seen, still more how he came to remember me at that age I could not imagine. My own recollection of him dates from the time I was at College, and he was working under Professor Syme. We had a common friend Robert Callander (‘Bobbie Callander’ we called him) who was working with him under Syme, and whom I used often to visit at the Minto House Surgical Hospital, where we had many pleasant talks on Literature, and music especially, and the thousand and one topics that interest young men on the threshold of active life. From that time we were always friends. Our talk when we met was generally about books and the writers that were making their way to eminence. I was then a devoted admirer of Carlyle, reading his *Sartor Resartus* as it came out month by month in *Fraser’s Magazine*; and of Thackeray, whose *Fitzboodle Papers* and others of his minor sketches had riveted my attention in the same Magazine. Dr. John and I were both of the same mind as to the genius of these men, and in those days, I remember well, we had not many of our circle of friends to agree with us. Dr. John seemed to take an interest in my own little doings in literature, and I remember still the delight I had in his praising a preface I had written to a reprint of Sir Thomas Urquhart’s translation of Rabelais, of which 100 copies were printed for special circulation. It took me by surprise, that he should have thought it worthy of notice, for I had a very high opinion of his judgment, and I may truly say, a very low opinion of my faculty as a writer. It was impossible to know him, to see his fine faculty of observation both of men and nature, his aptness of expression, and the sweet geniality of humour that pervaded his friendly talk, and not to see in him the elements of authorship of a high and distinctive kind. Again and again I would urge him to write, but with characteristic modesty he resisted the suggestion. He had a high idea of what writing was alone justifiable, and did not at the time feel in himself that marked individuality in observing and thinking, which ultimately found its way in *Rab and his Friends*, and his other papers. In 1844 I left Edinburgh, and our intercourse from time to time was in letters only, for I had only brief glimpses of him in very few and hurried visits to Edinburgh. His letters were always precious to both Lady Martin and myself, and I kept nearly all of them, save perhaps one or two that I may have given to enthusiastic lovers of his books. Old Lady Lyndhurst, widow of the great Chancellor, found the greatest comfort in reading them, when between 80 and 90 years of age. I lent her one copy and she read and re-read them, as her pet book, to the last. She was a very clever woman.”

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CXXXIX. To PRINCIPAL SHARP<sup>1</sup>

Wednesday [6th January 1862].

I like this more and more.<sup>2</sup> It has an unspeakable charm—the true pastoral melancholy of the region—and these long satisfying lines, like the stride of a shepherd over the crown of Minchmoor. Why not send it to Thackeray for the *Cornhill*? I will be its godfather. I wish you had another word than “winsome” for the summer. . . . Thank you again for this exquisite song. I would rather have been the man to write it than Gladstone with all his greatness and goodness.—Ever yours,

J. B.

CXL. To JOHN DOWNES

23 RUTLAND STREET, EDINBURGH, 4th Feb. 1862.

MY DEAR DOWNES— . . . At times I bethink myself a magazine Monthly, with *ME* and you as editors! observe the precedency - delicacy of “ME.” I would give *Rab's* prestige (!oh the vanity!) and you would coach it, and I would keep up all my overflowings of Genius! (vanity again!) which find their way into the *Scotsman*, into daily talk, and into the letters to you (to no one else), and they would find fine issue in the Magazine. Why not call it the Scots Magazine?

I will see Russel to-day and speak to him. I am very sorry for you. I know how your bigness slips into melancholy and a quiet despair. *Wee* men dare not do this lest their existence and substance runs out in the *interim*. They must have no pause or lapse into darkness; these fallings away and misgivings never happen to your small men. How is your breathing? and your cough? Yes, Gavin is a brick; what a pair of Eyes! and what a queer, loveable, original mouth and speech. Give him my love, and take it.—Yours ever, J. B.

CXLI. To SIR THEODORE MARTIN

23 RUTLAND STREET, EDINBURGH, 4th February [1862].

MY DEAR THEODORE MARTIN—Thanks for your warm-hearted letter. I like so much your saying that about the breeding of my mind, and all the side-lights and sub-

<sup>1</sup> Published in *Principal Sharp and his Friends*.

<sup>2</sup> “The Bush aboon Traquair.”

## Letters of Dr. John Brown [1862

suggestions. I feel it to be so true, and so sweet, and so rarely said, because so unlikely to be felt. I often feel Bobby Callander<sup>1</sup> tapping at my heart and saying, "Write me down"; if so, you with your great, earnest *een* and bastion-like forehead will be hauled in! Ruskin is not by me; I wish it were, as to thought and style. It is by young Lancaster, a Glasgow Oxford man at the Bar here, a regular big 'un. I had all but promised to do parts of it, Turner, and Ruskin as an artist, but having John Ruskin as a very dear friend, I did not wish to have a word of mine in an article where, with the strongest praise and thorough appreciation, there is also so much severity, not undeserved in many ways, but more sharp than I, a lover and a friend, would have used in "correcting" that wonderful genius. I would have used the wrong end of the tawse. Now Lancaster's ends bite like fire.

Catullus I have only dipped into. It is scholarly, and well written; it is by "a Scot," young Kinnear,<sup>2</sup> an Advocate. He wrote a very pleasant paper on Shelley in the last but one *Quarterly*. I can't judge of his laying on your strong head with your own stick, but I am more and more coming to the conclusion that poetry is as untransferable as wine. What would you make of "translating" Burgundy or old Madeira? It would only end in so much hot dry brandy and so much water, the aroma, the bouquet disappearing into space *in transitu*. This is awful to say to *you*. Its essence flies; you *may* make an entirely new wine out of its ruins, but this is not done once in 10,000 years. Depend upon it, the way a man of genius really gets his heart and mind out about the poetry of strange tongues which he wishes his ignorant friends to get an idea of, is to write such notes as you have done, or such prose transferences as Carlyle's *Inferno*; and yet I would be loath to give up Atys and the marriage.—Yours ever,

J. BROWN.

Write me a line when your Scottish blood boils over.

### CXLII. To LADY HISLOP<sup>3</sup>

23 RUTLAND STREET, EDINBURGH, 13th Feby., 10 P.M., 1862

DEAR LADY HISLOP—I have just come from Lady Minto, and you would have been delighted and comforted as only a

<sup>1</sup> See *Recollections of Dr. John Brown*, by Alexander Peddie, M.D.

<sup>2</sup> The Right Hon. Lord Kinnear.

<sup>3</sup> Wife of Gen. Sir Thomas Hislop and mother of Lady Minto.

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mother can be, to see her so bright and well. I think it was quite right in her to remain this week here. I say this quite apart from its being a great pleasure to me. I hope to-morrow will be fine, and if so I intend driving her out to Bonaly, Lord Cockburn's place. She has been reading the last volumes of Mrs. Delany,<sup>1</sup> finding some very curious and interesting matter, and much trash. It is such a pity that some one had not welded these 4 big volumes into one, and that one half the size. We are getting into our small gaieties here, our Exhibition of Pictures, our concerts and Dinners and Balls, not to speak of our Prayer Meetings against the Balls. We are a queer mixture of bigotry and paroxysmal gaiety, with a great amount of what is not untruly called "Godly hatred" of each other. I was very pleased to get your kind remembrances. I hope I may see you if I go to London in May, to what Mrs. Portal calls "the Merchants' Madhouse," this wonderful Exhibition.

With much regard, believe me, dear Lady Hislop, yours  
 ever truly, J. BROWN.

### CXLIII. TO HIS BROTHER ALEXANDER

23 RUTLAND STREET, EDINBURGH, 18th February 1862.

MY DEAR ALEXR.—Intermittent pulse of fraternal heart as usual! Not a day passes but I miss you, and wish to say something, and ask something; and yet I have been and am steadily busy, which is a great blessing. What is Crum B. thinking of for the future? I wish you would give us a few letters *more tuo*, accurate and telling, before you leave Heidelberg, for the *Scotsman*. Thackeray is in despair for the *Cornhill*. "Agnes of Sorrento" is fast sinking the ship. I am going to give him a queer bit of child-life of 50 years ago, quite to your heart, to be called "Pet Marjorie." I must have something to spin my *Choroid plexus* into. The new boiled down or evaporated up (per ascen. or descen.) edition of the *Horæ* in 1 Vol. is nearly printed. The Americans have done it very neatly, calling it *Spare Hours*, and cutting and carving very skilfully, and then dedicating the remains "affectionately" to a man I never saw, and may say don't know, Mr. Quaker Whittier. How good Tennyson on the Prince, and how

<sup>1</sup> *Autobiography and Correspondence of Mary Granville, Mrs. Delany*, by Lady Llanover, 1862.

## Letters of Dr. John Brown [1862

bad Mrs. Norton, meretricious, scented as with a concealative scent. Jane Crum is coming this week to your Jane. I had a long kind letter from Gladstone. . . . Good-bye, and write soon and come home soon. Nelly and Jock send their love. Dick is well, and Peter is for the 3rd time restored to our bosom.—Yrs., J. B.

### CXLIV. To HENRY TAYLOR, afterwards SIR HENRY TAYLOR<sup>1</sup>

23 RUTLAND STREET, EDINBURGH,  
*Sunday Evening [May 1862].*

MY DEAR MR. TAYLOR—I cannot refrain from thanking you for your note, and yet beyond this I don't know that I have any right to say anything. The work and the wife and the five children are better excuses for your not writing more, than the audience few. I think, generally speaking, a man should stand in doubt of himself when he is *very* popular; there must be some bit of quackery about him, and few things are more disorganising to the intellect and the moral sense, or more likely to develop the hump, and dwarf the man, than that open-mouthed readiness on the part of the public to take anything from some people. No man's greatest was ever brought forth under such auspices.

I think I already know your daughters, if not by name, by nature. Lady Minto will forgive me, I am sure, for telling you that she read bits of a letter of yours in which you painted them to her so that I would almost be able to say which is which. Have you three daughters and two sons? I have one of each, and have lost one lovely little woman at 3 months, 17 years ago. She died in a moment, when being brought up to her mother for her first drink. Have you lost any?

You will soon get the second part of Lady Minto's *Notes*.<sup>2</sup> The tragic story of Hugh Elliot's first marriage is in it, and a wonderful bit of intensity it is. That dark-eyed, swarthy, and slim man, full of fire, of love, of devotion, of wit and of melancholy, marrying that blue-eyed, soft, and white-skinned Teut, polyandrous and heartless. His posting from Copenhagen to Berlin, finding Apollo's scroll of the wife's letter, taking his child in his arms and telling his errand as he passed through the gates, his return, chasing the hand-

<sup>1</sup> See *infra*, Sir Henry Taylor's Letter of May 31st, 1862.

<sup>2</sup> *Notes from Minto MSS.*, privately printed 1862.

some sneak into Silesia, coming up to him in a solitary inn at 3 in the morning, thrashing him soundly, giving him the first fire in their duel, and making him write himself down a liar, a coward, and a villain; never saying a word against his wife, doting on the child; the mother's disappearance into solitude, her early death, etc. etc.—all this done as a Ballad would be very powerful, strange and touching. He must have been a very able and a very odd man. That retort to Frederick about Hyder Ali is perfect, and such a revenge (as he says) as Satan might have envied.<sup>1</sup>

I take the liberty of sending you a little book on Health; if you have a Scotch nurse, she will perhaps enjoy the Scotch bits. Pardon this running on, and believe me, yrs. ever truly and much,  
J. BROWN.

## CXLV. To LADY TREVELYAN

23 RUTLAND STREET, EDINBURGH, 9th May [1862].

MY DEAR LADY TREVELYAN—*The Scotsman* wishes much to hear from you; so you may begin your papers whenever you like—the sooner the better—and give yourself full scope, and write just when you like. I wonder where you are—I suppose in London. I am hoping to get up in June; a short note will be very acceptable. We continue here much as when I saw you. . . . When you write me I shall break forth into a decent letter; tell me about John Ruskin and the old people.

I have sent *Our Dogs* to Wallington; you will find yourself and *Peter* in Company with Lady Minto and *Fussy* and my brother Wm. and *Wasp*.

How delicious Miss Rossetti's Poems are—quite blossoms of thought and feeling and vision, delicious and natural as a flowery Hedgerow in June, or Rannoch in September. I am ruining myself buying copies. I have had sent me the £5 : 5/ proof of Tennyson's portrait by Watts—very noble. You have seen it, doubtless; if not, look in at 14 Pall Mall East, and ask for Mr. M'Kay—Kitty's brother, and a partner, and a shrewd and useful fellow.

My best regards to Sir Walter and his Wife. J. B.

<sup>1</sup> At Berlin in 1781 Frederick the Great, then an old man, said: "M. Elliot, qui est ce Hyder Ali qui sait si bien arranger vos affaires aux Indes?" Elliot promptly replied: "Sire, c'est un vieux despote qui a beaucoup pillé ses voisins, mais qui, Dieu merci, commence à radoter." *Op. cit.* p. 203.

# Letters of Dr. John Brown [1862]

## CXLVI. To HIS BROTHER ALEXANDER

23 RUTLAND STREET, EDINBURGH, 13th May [1862].

MY DEAR SAUNDERS—Thanks for your objurgatory and pleasant letter. Had I had any motions towards anger (which I hadn't) that soothing 600 miles would have settled them. Be it known, however, that "a deep dog was Crab" is a lawful trick of style,—not a Dickensism; that would have been "he was a deep dog was Crab"; and observe that what is wanted is to concentrate the soul of the reader upon the quality of deepness, not of Crab; and as the sentence runs, Crab was deep. You attain tremendous effect by putting a deep dog as an absolute idea, before Crab. Still I agree with you in the tendency to affectation and conceit in a certain author's writings, *Materiam superat opus*. This is the Synod, and Uncle Smith is in his glory<sup>1</sup>—a sort of meek importance all over the dear little man. John Cairns was preaching twice on Sabbath; very great he was (there again!). David and Elizabeth<sup>2</sup> were in, very happy, very healthy, with a sort of Scriptural look about them. Syme is gone to London to the Medical Council. I don't know if I shall go up to London. I care little now for anything beyond the *Scotsman* in the morning, my work, my food, and my bed; and then I have no spare cash. The last two years have been very expensive to me. Kitty is much as when I wrote. . . . How long do you think you will be in London, and when? . . . 10,000, I believe, of *Our Dogs* have gone off. . . . Good-bye, and write soon.—Yrs. ever affectly.,  
J. B.

Jockie and Nellie send their love.

## CXLVII. To GEORGE M'EWAN

[This letter was read at a Dinner to bid farewell to the Rev. Andrew Robertson, Stow, July 1, 1862.]

MY DEAR SIR—I regret very much that I cannot give myself the pleasure of being with you to-morrow, and joining with you in bidding an excellent and courageous friend good and God speed. He is not a man to change his mind or his principles at the antipodes. I see you have put me down for the health of the Synod. You little knew (I hope) the total

<sup>1</sup> Dr. Smith of Biggar was Moderator of the Synod of the United Presbyterian Church that year.

<sup>2</sup> The Rev. David and Mrs. Cairns of Stichel.



incapacity of your man. But I must say that if I could not do any credit to the Synod, I feel more and more the credit the Synod does me. This is the "blood and culture" I am most proud of—to have had a great-grandfather, a grandfather, three grand-uncles, a father, a second cousin, and three full cousins, and lastly, and very much to have, your Chairman and our Moderator my uncle and the minister of Biggar, and what is more, and of the Biggar manse—the man of whom the Upper Ward says: "*We may leeve without Dr. Smith, but naebody can dee without him.*" My younger sister and brother are still deeper dyed, having Ebenezer Erskine and Mr. Fisher as their forbears. So you see I am a very Hebrew of the Hebrews, and say, with my whole heart, long life to the Synod! I for one in no way desire its going to any Body's door and asking admission. Our own door is open to all comers *on our own terms*. You see I have broken out into a speech, much longer and much more articulate, I can assure you, than anything I could have agonised myself and you over had I been on my legs. I beg in the course of the evening to give you my three V.'s as a toast: "Voluntaryism in Religion"—all agreed, of course; "Voluntaryism in Education" many agreed, and always the more; "Voluntaryism in Charity" (the entire poor-law question)—very few (as yet) on this agreed. *Me* and Chalmers (as the Ettrick Shepherd said, "*Me* and Burns").

## CXLVIII. TO HIS SON

[Monday, August or September 1862.]

MY DEAR JOHN—This has been a capital adventure; you must have enjoyed it, and what a quantity of fish! How did you cook your Venison? Mama was quite pleased to hear your letter read; she is much the same, has had no bad turn. I hope you will catch a good big pike. These 2 five-pounders must have been good big fellows. I am quite pleased at your success. When you go to Struan's you must take your rod and go up to Loch Lydoch and Loch Ericht. Tell Nellie there are no news except that Robert Cox is married to Miss Elizabeth Hill NOT QUITE.

Good-bye, and love to the girls. Write me a letter soon, and tell Nellie and J A N I E to do the same.—Your affectionate

J. B.

# Letters of Dr. John Brown [1862]

## CXLIX. To THE SAME

23 RUTLAND STREET, EDINBURGH, 17th [August] 1862.

MY DEAR JOHN—I was quite pleased with your letter. Mama and I have been together all day. She is feebler, I think. I hope we are going to have better weather at last. Tell Bob that I am sorry to say Adam has broken his father's head with a brown DISH very severely, and he has been put in prison by the Provost of Elie, and his head shaved, and each alternate tooth drawn; he is as well as could be expected. I think you and Bobby should make the Dunkeld journey, and also go up to Robert Stewart in Glen Tilt, and go to the top of BEN-Y-GLOE. Mama sends her love. She often asks when you are coming home.

Tell Bobbie that the bleeding from Adam's teeth was tremendous, but his nose was the better of it. His father has forgiven him and settled 5 pence a week upon him, to be continued to Bobby if he dies. Good-bye, my dearest Jockie.—Your affectionate father,  
J. B.

## CL. To HIS SISTER ISABELLA

13th September 1862.

MY DEAR ISABELLA— . . . I was all yesterday at North Berwick, or rather on the sea, visiting Fiddry, etc. John Taylor was with me. I found a delightful long letter from Lady Augusta Bruce. She is with the Queen, who has been reading *Horæ Subsecivæ*, and was greatly interested about Arthur Hallam, and wishing to know if the paper on him could not be had separately for her to give away. Perhaps I may print it like the sixpenny *Rab*, with a woodcut of Clevedon Church where the Hallam race lie. The children come at the latest this day week, and I hope to get away for two days to Edward Maitland at Compstone in Galloway. When do you and your *suite* return?—Yours ever affectionately,  
J. B.

## CLI. To JOHN R. FINDLAY

[Sep. 30, 1862.]

MY DEAR SIR—Thanks for Clough; you have done it very well, not so enthusiastically as I would. I place Clough very high as an intellectual and moral poet, and I would have had

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a kick at the (by way of) imaginative crew, Dobell, Smith, that varmint Massey, *et hoc genus omne*, who are bedevilling and bedrunkifying our literature; and I would not have blamed him for his Oxfordism, and I would have considered that in writing to his Celtic lass the Greek words were to himself and the learned world, not to her, and I would certainly have told shortly, as you could well have done, the Insurance Clerk's (small) adultery business and quoted the whole of the wife's speech. But you have done it well and heartily. Let me have another proof of Minchmoor, which I hope to make much better by getting Professor Shairp's liberty to quote a fine song of his, "The Bush aboon Traquair," recounting his feelings on visiting the remains of the famous "Bush."—Yours ever, J. B.

Please let me have Minchmoor if possible to-night.

CLII. To JOHN SKELTON<sup>1</sup>

23 RUTLAND STREET, EDINBURGH, *Sunday* [December 1862].

MY DEAR SKELTON, AND SHIRLEY—*Thalatta* has come, and I am sure I shall get much enjoyment from it. Whaur gat ye that style? and how I envy you your bits of verse, which seem to have had for their final Cause and end their being so embedded! But I don't envy you your worship of Benjamin. Do you really and truly look upon that splendid scamp as either a patriot or a politician? I think you must lash yourself into all your 'Tory fury in some unknown cavern, and thence issue into your besmoken room in Alva Street. I admire Benjamin too, as a man of genius and audacity, and the author of *Henrietta Temple* and of his own fortunes, but, as an English minister and the mouthpiece of the British will and power, it amazes me that with your bumps of Causality and Comparison you can believe in him.

Thanks again for this beautiful book. I wish I were younger and happier, and away in Rannoch in the Black Wood<sup>2</sup> with it, at the end of June.—Yours ever truly,  
J. BROWN.

<sup>1</sup> Afterwards Sir John Skelton, K.C.B., author of *Essays of Shirley* and *Maitland of Lethington*

<sup>2</sup> Where the black birch still grows.

# Letters of Dr. John Brown [1863]

## CLIII. To JOHN DOWNES

23 RUTLAND STREET, EDINBURGH, 21st Jany. [1863].

MY DEAR DOWNES—I was thinking of you at the very time your warm *jovial* (that is the word with a big as well as little jeye) letter came in and cheered me and filled me. I could not keep from reading it out to Helen and John, who are under the delusion that they like you nearly as much as a big new dog we have got, a glorious fellow whom I am training to run down — and all my enemies.

My dear friend, you needed not to apologise for over ambition any more than for over adipose matter; your great fault is want of self-assertion to the outer world. You are adamantine, I know, in your concretions, and even in your fancies, and have too much sense not to know the length and power of your arm, and the *wecht* and momentum of your brain, but you don't make the most of yourself to the great gaping public; and your fun and cleverness you reserve too much for such delightful rollicking and nicherin' as in this letter, gambolling like the said big affectionate ruffian of ours in the snow just now. Well, I hope the "Spectreship" may come; if not, something else will; and after all if the *placens* and the *parvuli*, etc., were all safe, and the *nunc dimittis* come, neither you nor I will break our hearts at going down that stair; it leads out into the everlasting heaven and its stars. Are you really growing fat? that is good, and so I am sure is yon upon Wilson. Russel was severish, but justish. I admired and loved, but could not respect the great Christopherus. There was a dash of *BOSH* in him, a hulli-ballooishness, and a sort of demoralised and demoralising sentimentality that at once took and disgusted me, but he was big and noble and full of love; keep him off Cockneys and vermin in general—there he was merciless and expiffigating as my said Dog is to cat or rat. I have been very busy with my doctoring work, and a good deal tired. Two weeks ago I felt as if the Hourglass was all but run out, but somehow somebody turned the glass and the sands are running more briskly. Mrs. Brown is no better, indeed worse, the mind more and more obstructed and hidden, inaccessible. Nelly and John are well and send their regards. He is at College and Mathematics and French, and picking up knowledge of the world, and *girls* at occasional dancing-parties. He is a good honest boy who, as Carlyle would say, looks

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existence in the face; for the non-existent and imaginative he manifests a profound contempt, even in his "parient."

Good-bye, and don't be so long of writing. My best regards to the Wife. I would like *her* version of your health, really and truly.—Ever, my dear friend and fellow, yours affectly.,  
J. B.

CLIV. TO THE REV. DR. PETER DAVIDSON

March 1863.

MY DEAR MINISTER—I am delighted with the Syllabus of the Lectures.<sup>1</sup> It is a book that is sure to do good and make an impression by its intellectual power, honesty, and accuracy, as well as acuteness, and most of all by its deep godliness. I wish to say something and yet I feel how little right I have to say it. It is this, that in the first Lecture—which is the one I could most readily miss—there are some severe expressions I could have liked either away or mollified—everything against the *sincerity* of a man is dangerous, because, though we can judge pretty well (and only that) of our own sincerity and motives, we hardly ever can of those of such men as this. What you and I could feel to be in us basely and contemptibly insincere may be and often is not so with others, and you always gain in the main by giving your opponent all you honestly can, before smiting him to the ground. He is a conceited, silly writer—unable to see the *proportions* of truths, or even to know truth when he sees it, unless it be the barest numerical truth—and he is a rash, unfair (it may be unconsciously), and to me totally unreadable man, but I do believe the man thinks he is doing God service and is honest in his way, though vain and one-eyed to ludicosity, as you have most thoroughly and delightfully shown.

But forgive this, and believe me, yours gratefully,  
J. BROWN.

CLV. TO THE SAME

[1863.]

MY DEAR MINISTER—Thanks; I have read the Preface with great admiration; it is quick as well as powerful—keen and clean in its edge. I have suggested an alteration at

<sup>1</sup> Dr. Davidson delivered a series of Lectures, afterwards published, in which he controverted the views of Bishop Colenso on the Pentateuch.

## Letters of Dr. John Brown [1863

page ix., it seems to me to bring out your meaning more fairly. Many of these men are really painstaking, painful thinkers, and their Reason brings them, I daresay (poor fellows!), often enough up to sudden walls, precipices, and quagmires which do not please them, however much they may gratify their deified "it."

Perhaps I ought to end here, but I cannot with comfort. I do not and never have been able to hold the doctrine of eternal punishments, as I know you and many of my dearest and most honoured friends hold and have held it. I have never been able to find it articulately taught in the Bible. I do not say it is not taught, only I have never found it. I think the whole subject is as much surrounded with difficulty, and I incline to think on the part of Revelation with *intentional* obscurity, as it is with awful and salutary horror. Don't suppose, then, I hold any of the several forms of opinion fixedly; it is one of the things, and there are many in the Bible, I am content to remain in doubt as to. I don't see how any fear of eternal punishment could add to the love of God and moral hatred of and fleeing from sin which is of the essence of "change of mind." At the same time, I am not giving in to the finity of man's sin requiring finite punishment. I think this nonsense—for man the sinner is for ever contracting fresh guilt and liability to punishment. If I incline to any formal belief in the matter, it is to that of John Locke and Archbishop Whately—the annihilation by a sovereign act of the Almighty of His impenitent creatures—not at death, and not without judgment and suffering—and what more awful thought can come into a being with a soul than its extinction—except it be what I feel would make me a maniac if I believed it (though this is no reason why I should not believe it upon evidence)—the sufferings of sentient beings as everlasting as the being of the Almighty. I have never been able to get past what John Foster says on this subject. But I ought to ask your pardon for this. I admired the clear incisive thinking of all you say on this in the Preface, and might therefore have said nothing more. I send you a letter by Thomas Erskine, one of the holiest and best men I ever knew, to show you his mind—not that it is my mind, but because I cannot think the man I knew him to be can be without "the truth as it is in Jesus"—the "saving truth." But, as I before have said, I desire not to dogmatise *at all* on this tremendous subject.

I am especially delighted with your bringing in our stout

## 1863] Letters of Dr. John Brown

old Voluntaryism pure and simple at the end—in this I am entirely at one with you. But I fear the good people within the citadel will not come out till some rough Joshua with his rams' horns astonishes them some fine Saturday.—Yrs. ever truly,  
J. BROWN.

### CLVI. To HIS DAUGHTER

*April 26th, 1863.*

DEAR NELLY—Mr. Syme and Jim and Uncle William and I had a famous day on Thursday at Leadhills, and the Enterkin and Dalveen,—quite wonderful, especially the Enterkin, a very deep, narrow, green valley so lonely and solemn. . . . Bob has just upset a Lamplighter, and dispersed his ladder and his lantern. He seems to hate all Lamplighters. He is much quieter and never attacks little dogs. My best regards to Mrs. Ferrier, who might have been the wife of Coriolanus, in which case Coggie would have been somebody else, which I would regret. Good-bye, my dear child.—Yours affectionately,  
J. B.

### CLVII. To PROFESSOR SELLAR

23 RUTLAND STREET, EDINBURGH, *July 7th* [1863].

MY DEAR SELLAR—I could come, as you know, and I am now going to say nothing more about it. I hope in a day or two to hear from Spiess. I send Mrs. Sellar Clough's Poems and Memoir. I don't know when a book and *man* more laid hold on me. I always liked, indeed loved him, and felt his sincerity and sensibility and power, and that uncertainty of conviction of his and sense of the riddle of existence, drew him very much to myself as being like-minded, but I think more of him than ever. Read that last story "The Clergyman's Tale," above all read Jane's pleading at the end, and I will wonder if you don't say there is nothing like it since Crabbe's

Whom never more shall I forsake or see.

Tell me what you and Mater think of it.

You know the letting off of the steam when the ship stops; was it ever better worded than in this line

Wild in white vapour flew away the force.

## Letters of Dr. John Brown [1863]

Palgrave's Memoir is very good, and makes you like him as well as Clough, but there is a sadness (in the sense of bread which is not "riz"), a want of all gaiety and elasticity about him and all his works. Is he for ever damp with that dead passion of his? . . .—Yours and hers ever, J. B.

### CLVIII. To SIR THEODORE MARTIN

23 RUTLAND STREET, EDINBURGH, 8th July [1863].

MY DEAR THEODORE—Thanks for this beautiful Quarto, and thanks for your thinking of sending it to me.<sup>1</sup> I am sure it will while away many a one of my now necessarily weary hours. I have not done more than dip into it.

Schiller's *Ideals* and Uhland's *Dante* I like, and so will I doubtless much else. It is amazing to me your pith and spirit, how you can do such thorough work, as play, after your other work. I have neither brains nor "go" for this, even if I had the genius. Do you ever see the *Museum*? There is a translation in it for this month of part of the y D'Arcy W. Thompson of the Edinburgh Academy, *Ancient Leaves* you may have seen, which seems e excellent. Good-bye, and God bless you and your dear wife. If you see the snowy Megalander W. M. T. give him my ancient regards. What a wonderful bit of genius his daughter's *Elizabeth*<sup>2</sup> is! so like and so unlike the sire's handicraft.—Yours and Mrs. Martin's ever truly, J. BROWN.

### CLIX. To MISS CONNIE HILLIARD<sup>3</sup>

23 RUTLAND STREET,  
EDINBURGH, Augt. XIIIth [1863].

MY OWN DEAREST LITTLE WIFIKIE—HOW DO YOU DO? I MISS YOUR SELF MORE THAN I CARE TO TELL YOU OR ME. BUT IT IS TIRE-SOME TO GO ON MAKING THESE CLUMSY FELLOWS OF LETTERS, so here is a picture of young Saturn and his R I N G, which you see is just the rim of his wide-awake driven over his eyes,—no wonder he is sulky.

<sup>1</sup> Probably *Poems, Original and Translated* (privately printed), 1862.

<sup>2</sup> *Story of Elizabeth*, by Anne Thackeray.

<sup>3</sup> See Facsimile of this letter on opposite page.



FACSIMILE LETTER  
FROM DR. JOHN BROWN TO MISS HILLIARD

*To face p. 162.*

23 RUTLAND STREET

EDINBURGH

AUG-<sup>T</sup>  
XIII<sup>TH</sup>-

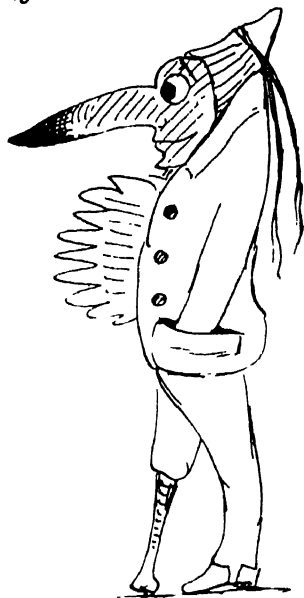
MY OWN DEAREST  
LITTLE WIFIE  
HOW DO YOU DO?  
I MISS YOUR SE-  
-LF MORE THAN I  
CARE TO TELL  
YOU OR ME.  
BUT IT IS TIR-  
-E SOME TO GOO-  
-N MAKING TH-

# -ESE CLUMSY FELLOWS OF LETTERS

So here  
is a picture of young Saturn  
his RING. Which you  
see is just the rim of his  
wide awake. Driven over  
his eyes, no wonder he is  
silly.



I came home with a funny little  
man of this look & size - it  
was so queer to see him giving  
his ticket to the Railway man  
at Dunbar



The name on his Hat Box was

TIGLATH-  
PELESER

He told as a great secret -  
which I now tell you as one  
too, that he needed that

long & strong nose to protect

73 RUTLAND STREET

his shirt **FRIL** and I be-  
lieved him -

EDINBURGH

There was another queer wee  
man waiting for him at the  
toppation of this look &  
size

He  
is  
in  
a  
cab -  
He  
is  
tightht  
away.



His name is his Cab - and that  
is his whip he is holding behind his  
back & it is a very bad one - was  
and I have my own  
from a sort of crown in air took that was

You can't see his hands

He of 'Rashan

because they are behind his  
back, you know. and you  
know also how much I  
like you. & hope you are to  
be a great Comf to all your  
friends. and you know too

I **MUST** see your

Journal & especially, what  
you said about the great



and you must write me  
a letter when you get back  
to Wallington. Goodbye  
+ goodnight my dear  
little wife + believe me  
your

APHEK-  
HANB

J E Y E B E E

1863]      Letters of Dr. John Brown

This is the rest of him as there was no room.

And here is his dog, who is an Irish Grey-hound in disguise.

I came home with a funny little man of this look and size; it was so queer to see him giving his ticket to the Railway man at Dunbar. The name on his Hat Box was TIGLATH-PELESER. He told as a great secret, which I now tell you as one too, that he needed that long and strong nose to protect his shirt FRILL and I believed him.

There was another queer wee man waiting for him at the Joppa Station, of this look and size.

He took Tiglath away in his cab. His name on his cab—and that is his whip he is holding behind his back, and it is a very bad one—was OG, and I have my own notion from a sort of crown on his top that was He of Bashan. You can't see his hands because they are behind his back, you know; and you know also how much I like you, and hope you are to be a great comf. to all your friends; and you know too I MUST see your Journal, and especially what you said about the great

T

under the

(tree)

and you must write me a letter when you get back to Wallington.<sup>1</sup> Good-bye and good-night, my dear little Wifie, and believe me your APHEKSHAN8,                      JEYE BEE.

CLX. To THE SAME

23 RUTLAND STREET, EDINBURGH, 25th November [1863].

MY DEAR, LITTLE, WEE WIFIEKIE—Thanks for these famous Doghips. They are capital, and much better than our Cottage at Wallington, though I like it very much, especially the watering-pan. Where are you? with Aunty<sup>2</sup> or at Uxbridge? I am so glad to have this Photo of you; it is so “awfully” (as young people now call very) good and like, the mouth especially, and the sly, prim, droll, quaint, queer, dear, funny, sunny look all over, which is EURZ.

Now write me a wee notie some day soon, for I am often very glad to be made to like anybody and feel a little funny,

<sup>1</sup> This letter was written shortly after Dr. Brown's first meeting with Ruskin at Wallington. See *infra*, p. 287.

<sup>2</sup> Lady Trevelyan.



## Letters of Dr. John Brown [1863

and as we, that great WE, did at that famous T drinking in the flower-garden at Wallington, when the queerest of men was there, J E Y E E R R.<sup>1</sup> Good-bye, my own dear little wifekie.—Your old friend,  
J. B.

### CLXI. To LADY MINTO

23 RUTLAND STREET, EDINBURGH, 25th Novr. 1863.

MY DEAR LADY MINTO—Thanks very much for your letter. Your boys are, I think, happy and busy. I shall watch Hugh and see that the diligent Haas does not overtask him, and I hope on Saturday to get a ride across the Pentlands with them both. They are so curiously like and unlike. I enjoy so much the sweet but stout humour of Hugh. I took them both to Mr. Syme's, and whenever Mima, the newly-married daughter, comes home, they will go out and have a little merriment. Syme was, for him, wonderfully frank with them, the truth being that he likes them. He has a singular instinct for whatever is true, be it in disease or character. He is himself the very embodiment of truth. I quite understand what you say of Hugh and Dr. Haas, and will do what I can to get him objective as well as subjective pursuits. I like to think of that open-browed, open-minded, and, in a good sense, open-hearted son at Dresden, getting the good of the world with the least possible injury and the greatest good. He is sure to make a good man, and a good husband when the time comes. His face and a very different one occur to me at this moment as if I saw them in the room. Lady Augusta is to be married in December, and in Edinburgh with her Dean in July. You must try and come in and hear his Lectures on Solomon and all his glory! How perfectly just and perfectly expressed your words on Renan! I have read them without your name to several of our best men, and they were surprised at their perfection not only in what they say, but not less in what is left unsaid. That about the Apostles is so true, and I don't believe you know how clever as well as how true, and in the best sense philosophical, these words are—"*The endeavour to produce supernatural results by natural means is a complete failure.*" This is really touching the heart of the whole matter *with a needle*. I have seen nothing so good on this delusive and deluded book, by man

<sup>1</sup> The Scotch phonetic pronunciation of J. R. ; John Ruskin.

or woman, and I mean to make some use of them (in a very quiet and safe way) in my next volume of odds and ends. I could preach a sermon on the words I have quoted; it is the core of Christianity. Supernatural effects *are* produced; therefore they must have an adequate or supernatural Cause, and Causer. By the bye, I do hope you will do something for the *North British* for February. When you lose Fitz, which I hope will be soon, you might give us your Grandfather; it would be delightful and stand out a perfect sketch of a man entirely and through and through *original*. *Do think of, and do do this.*

These were clever lines on Strathbogie in the *Scotsman*. They were by Lord Neaves. I am ashamed of all this.—Yours and Lord Minto's and the lively AND patient Fitz's ever truly,  
J. BROWN.

## CLXII. To HIS SISTER MRS. WILSON

23 RUTLAND STREET, EDINBURGH,  
2nd Decr. 1863, Tuesday, 2 P.M.

MY DEAREST JANE—I have just been hearing from Isabella of your home-coming and your kirk-ing and your deep happiness. You “feel that you are happier than you know.” There is nothing like it, and once felt, it is for ever; over this death and time and change and misery have no power. The two first you must meet, and the second will help you to heap up your running-over measure. May God keep from you the two last, but even though they come, they can never make you not feel what you feel now. I didn't mean to tumble into this transcendental sentence. It has seemed a very strange, but by no means unhappy week; it brought back my own marriage so immediately, and I felt there was a far more exceeding joy and thankfulness than the reverse. Tell James that I am sensible of a distinct addition of affection, of nearness for and to him since this day week! He is much more to me. Isabella is now in the dining-room with Maggie and Nellie. She goes at 4; we have enjoyed her very much; and William too, he was immensely liked by Candlish's ruffians.<sup>1</sup> If you take to having Lectures in New Abbey, he would delight you. I couldn't bear having to be in bed all Saturday with faintness and shivering and headache. I am better now, though pretty well run down. Jane and Mary

<sup>1</sup> A jocular allusion to some young men's class.

## Letters of Dr. John Brown [1863

went yesterday. Good-bye, you will send me a line by and by and a *sketch of the house*! the manse, the abode of two happy spouses. My love to James and my respectful obeisances to the Moderaaaaator. . . . You heard Dr. Davidson's parting shot and joke, that in this matter (the marriage) you were a thorough Voluntary, and that you were both United Presbyterians! . . .—Yrs. ever, J. B.

### CLXIII. To LADY AIRLIE

23 RUTLAND STREET, EDINBURGH, 10th Decr. 1863.

MY DEAR LADY AIRLIE—May I thank you for two great pleasures? Your having thought of sending Dean Stanley's Sermon, and the sermon itself, which I read to-day as I drove about town. It is such as no man living but himself could have written or thought of writing—such fervour, such spiritual quickness, such affectionateness, with all that rich, unexpected, and yet natural utterance. Other preachers are eloquent or subtle or learned or weighty, but he alone is *apostolic*, as if he had in him the very blood of John of Patmos, of whom *altius caeteris Dei patefecit Arcana* is true. Thanks for this great and good pleasure. How sad for him and for Lady Augusta, as for all, and above all for the desolate wife, this calamity of Lord Elgin! <sup>1</sup>

I hope you and Lord Airlie and all yours are well, and that you have perfectly got over your accident. Thanks again very much for your remembering and enriching me.—Yours ever truly, J. BROWN.

I wish he had not been so tender to *Renan*. I cannot accept his compliments to the Man Christ Jesus after he has stripped Him of His Godhead. If so stripped, is He worth the worshipping?

### CLXIV. To HIS SISTER MRS. WILSON

23 RUTLAND STREET, EDINBURGH, 1st Jan'y. 1864.

MY DEAREST JANE—Thanks for your letter. I knew you would be thinking of me at this death,<sup>2</sup> and, my dear Sister, you will very soon be thinking of me at one far more than this: my darling is dying. I thought she might have

<sup>1</sup> Governor-General of India, died November 1863.

<sup>2</sup> The death of Thackeray.

## 1864] Letters of Dr. John Brown

been released yesterday, and entered into the joy of her Lord. I have given her up to Him. I was much shaken by Thackeray's death. You will have Alexr. with you and much fun and enjoyment. Give James my best regards and Alexr. too, and many, many happy New Years to them and to you. Good-bye, my dearest Jane.—Yours affectionately,  
J. B.

### CLXV. TO LADY TREVELYAN

*Monday [Jany. 1864].*

This is the day of her burial.<sup>1</sup>

MY DEAR FRIEND—I was sure you would write. Your letter and such as yours keep me up—steady and comfort, and indeed rejoice me. I do not know what would have become of me else. Yes, my dear friend and hers, we will think of her now as she was: bright and lovely, keen and good and faithful, and full of duty and sense and hidden tenderness. I never knew till she was broken, and her inner nature disclosed by the rifts of the horrible shattering 4 years ago, how simple, how abiding her love was; and my only feeling *now* is gratitude to God, and to her, and to my friends. She is blessed for ever. I can now feel (at least) that I have communion with her free, unshrouded, unimprisoned, and no longer tortured self. I feel surer of her essential existence than ever, and as if she may be near me when I know it not—pitying us, praying for us, interceding with the great High Priest—who, blessed be God, is a Priest *for ever*—for our salvation. On Thursday the week before last she became suddenly worse; vitality gave way, and that lovely dwelling-place fell fast into ruin; there was no doubt *now* of the end; and for the first time during all these years I was reconciled—far more than reconciled—to let her go. It would have been wretched selfishness otherwise. But her compact, firm, courageous organisation fought the last enemy to the last. . . . She did not (I hope) suffer in body or in mind. What was in her mind her God only knows—for *it was there* to the last, only withheld, bound—but she knew me and rested her eyes on me apparently till their lids gently fell down, and she kissed me eagerly and like as a baby, as if to feed upon me, on Tuesday, for which I shall ever bless God. Of course I know how unworthy, how unkind, how imperfect, how unfulfilling, how unlike her I have been; but in spite of this she loved me,

<sup>1</sup> Dr. Brown's wife died on January 6th.

## Letters of Dr. John Brown [1864

sweet darling, to the end. The children are well; they are terrified at the horribleness of death, of their mother's death, their faithful and best friend, but they are reconciled, and they are young. Good-bye my dear, dear friend, endeared through and for her as well as for yourself.—Yours and Sir Walter's ever,  
J. B.

### CLXVI. To JOHN DOWNES

23 RUTLAND STREET, EDINBURGH, *Janry., Sunday* [1864].

MY DEAR FRIEND—Thanks for yours; I ought to have written you long before this. It was all settled about the Examinership, that it was to be left to the Arts' Professors. You were highly applauded and sympathised with. I am so far glad at your accounts, but wish you could say more; still it is a blessing you are in the body at all, and I have no doubt you are laying in real strength. . . . You say very truly what I am feeling; very strange it is, but I was happier for 4 or 5 days after her death than I ever probably was in all my life. I was so thankful for her relief, her certain blessedness, her escape from the burden, the imprisonment of the flesh, and thankful too for her wonderful delightfulness and faithfulness to me all her life, and for some hope of meeting her again. I was exalted above my own selfish miseries and wants; but the ebb is coming now and the changeless want, the "*no more*" of everything this is dulling me. It was a sad time for 5 days. She fought the last enemy to the very last, but at that last she, in her own sweet, decent way, resigned herself, and literally fell asleep. We didn't know when she ceased to live till we saw a sudden pallor and celestial brightness shine out from her lovely face. O my God, what shall I render to Thee for this Thy greatest benefit, short of thyself, the having had the love and the possession of such a creature!

The children are well, and send their best regards. I am fortunately very busy. Lancaster and I have been trying to say something in the *North British* on Thackeray, which I shall send you. You will be glad to know that the *Review* has risen since last number 300 in subscribers. I think it will do well, thanks to the energy, sense, and perfect honesty of Douglas. Good-bye, write me soon. I am not somehow in the humour for scribbling: it will come on me some day soon.—Yrs. ever affectly.,  
J. BROWN.

NIGHT THOUGHTS<sup>1</sup>

I stand amid the ruins of a life,  
 With seraph voices sounding  
 Higher and higher 'mid the hushing strife,  
 To tell of faith and hope and love abounding—  
 Calling my spirit to that happier home  
 Where the loved lost one dwells, no more to roam.

Safe o'er the fiery ploughshares hath she pass'd,  
 Thy gracious hand upholding,  
 Following her Saviour's footsteps to the last,  
 Till she is now her Saviour's face beholding.  
 I thank Thee, Lord, who gav'st my fainting soul  
 An Angel pure to lead me to Thy goal.

I thank Thee, Lord, that through a narrow way,  
 Beset with thorns of sorrow,  
 Thy Grace has led me on from day to day,  
 To wait with humble thankfulness Thy morrow,  
 Blessing Thy name for all Thou did'st bestow,  
 To cheer our weary pilgrimage below.

CLXVII. TO SIR GEORGE HARVEY

23 RUTLAND STREET, EDINBURGH, *Friday* [*Feb'y. 12th, 1864*].

MY DEAR OLD FRIEND—Thanks once more. The time must be drawing not far off when neither you will give nor I receive this annual pledge of friendship, and neither you nor I would wish to stay very long here. Everything now is made sacred to me by a reference to her, whose loveliness and young beauty, and what was and is far better, her truth and love, you know better now than almost any. I often bless you for the words you sent me on her death: nobody touched the exact chord you did.

I am delighted with the "Penny Bank"<sup>2</sup>—such perfect possession of head and hand, and of course of heart; for time I don't think ever can do anything but deepen the goodness and the gentleness of a good and gentle heart.

Good-bye, and God Almighty, the Giver and the Taker away, the ALL in ALL, bless you and your two.—Yours ever,  
 J. BROWN.

<sup>1</sup> Found among Dr. Brown's papers after his death.

<sup>2</sup> The name of a picture exhibited by Sir George Harvey that year.

## Letters of Dr. John Brown [1864

### CLXVIII. TO MISS JESSIE CRUM

*Tuesday, Feb. 1864.*

MY DEAR JESSIE—I never thanked you for your note. I am very much pleased at your father liking the bit on the poor Duke.<sup>1</sup> I knew him a little, and knew a great deal of him and of his wonderful wife; and I think it is a sort of duty to say what is true about a man who, partly from his own fault, was not understood. He was a sort of Highland Terrier on its hind-legs, all the good and the bad of a terrier; but he was a much better man in his own way than that splendid and refined ruffian the Duke of Hamilton.

*Friday.*

DEAR JESSIE—This was begun on Tuesday in the Insurance Office while I was waiting, and I was called off to take a young Baronet's Life.<sup>2</sup> Don't think me conceited, but I got the Duchess of Athole's thanks for what I had said about her husband. She said she thought no one but herself knew him so well, and did him justice.

### CLXIX. TO THE REV. DR. JOHN CAIRNS

[A requisition was addressed to Dr. Cairns by representative Edinburgh citizens urging his removal from Berwick-on-Tweed to Edinburgh. See MacEwen's *Life of Dr. Cairns*, p. 470.]

23 RUTLAND STREET, EDINBURGH, *Saturday* [1st April 1864].

MY DEAR FRIEND—I am sure you will believe me when I say, I grieve to add to your tension and distress. I do pity you for all that is laid upon you, and which you must and can alone bear; but I hope that this document may relieve you so far as to make it all the easier to decide the question. It is a very serious thing to give and to receive such a paper as this, and you don't need me to tell you how thoroughly *representative* these names are, and how powerful. I could easily have got them quadrupled. I know, my dear friend, you will give its full weight to this very remarkable signature.

<sup>1</sup> Duke of Athole.

<sup>2</sup> In 1864 Dr. Brown was chosen as Medical Officer of the "Life Association of Scotland," an appointment which he held for the rest of his life. His rapid diagnosis as to character as well as health peculiarly suited him for this work. From the year 1876 his friend Dr. Alex. Peddie shared the office with him.

## 1864] Letters of Dr. John Brown

Adam Black in giving his name said, "This is more than ever was done for Dr. Chalmers." You must not feel oppressed by thinking we expect too much from you, or are expecting you to flourish at Soirees and on Platforms. This is the very reverse of what we wish. We simply wish you to be here.—Yours ever affectly. and EARNESTLY, J. BROWN.

### CLXX. To HIS SISTER ISABELLA

ST. FILLANS INN, *Friday, 2d June* [1864].

MY DEAR ISABELLA—This has been a dull east wind day, but we have enjoyed it. Nelly and I walked up the heathery and steep hill behind the Inn for about two miles, till we got to a lonely loch. I gave her Mother's letter to read. This is her own birthday and Sabbath is the anniversary of our marriage. Bob and Jockie crossed the Earn just as it leaps out of the Loch, and made for one of the wild Aberuchill hills; we then met here and had lunch, and the boys rowed Helen and me up the Loch. Then she went in, and I went with them up the hill they had been up before, to see a hawk's nest they had discovered in a deep cut in the hill. Never was anything more clever than the selection of the nest; we could get near but not to it; then home to dinner, very tidy and comfortable. I hope the weather will change and be warm and bright, that we may see this lovely country bright and glad. When at Crieff I went and saw our Cottage.<sup>1</sup> I think we may very likely come home by the Pass of Leny and Callander on Monday. Good-night. . . . Tell Alexander he would do well to bring you here some fine morning.—  
Yours affectionately, J. B.

### CLXXI. To HIS SON

23 RUTLAND STREET, EDINBURGH, *19th July* 1864.

MY DEAR JOCKIE—I hope you have got on all comfortably and enjoyed yourself and Bob. I sent on your Coat to Fisher's, where I hope you will get this. I suppose it has been awfully hot. You and Bob must construct a letter when you are at Kingussie. I wrote to Colonel Brewster Macpherson, so that you need have no qualms about going. I went with Professor Syme to Kailzie near Peebles, and had

<sup>1</sup> Where he and his wife stayed in the summer of 1846, shortly after their marriage.



## Letters of Dr. John Brown [1864]

a delightful walk on the hills and a great eat of the Cherries. My dear John, think often of your dear mother, try and recollect her, and keep her look and voice in your mind and heart; you will never see any one so good, at any rate no one more true and loving and wise; and try to think of her as existing and thinking of you and your best good, praying to her God and yours to keep you from sin and from harm; and in your prayers thank God for having given you such a mother, and pray to be made like her, so truthful and dutiful and to be trusted to the uttermost. Good-bye. My presectful regards to BOB. Nelly will write to you to Belleville.—  
Yrs. ever, J. B.

### CLXXII. TO THE SAME

23 RUTLAND STREET, EDINBURGH, *Friday* [1864].

MY DEAR JOCKIENINO—How are you? and how are your poor feet?<sup>1</sup> You must write me from Belleville, where I hope this finds you. Is Bob alive? and if alive, is he kicking? Have you been on the top of Ben M'Dhui? I hope you got the Coat at Fisher's, Braemar; I sent it. We have had some rain and much wind. Nelly goes out to the Millers next week. . . . Say to Bob, with my respectful condolences, that No. 4 Royal Terrace has been reduced to ashes. His father was smoking peaceably in the dining-room last night, when the Lord Provost entered and all the Bailies came each with a drawn sword in the left and a blazing torch in the right hand, and set fire first to him (R. Ellis, Esq., W.S.) and then to the house. All have escaped with their lives, but nothing else, except R. Ellis, Esq., W.S., and the Clerk who does his business in the room behind the dining-room. He died miserably, attempting to remonstrate with the Lord Provost. Elie behaved like the Brick she is, and planted a right-hander upon the nose of Bailie Cassels, who fled howling and set fire to Bailie Auchie in the byegoing. Everybody is as well as could be expected.

Good-bye. Nellie sends her love. Remember me to

— PELHAM, ESQR.

and be sure to write me.—Yours respectfully and fatherlily,  
J. B.

Remember me very much to the young Ladies, to Charlie and to the Baby, and to the Mother and Father of the same.

<sup>1</sup> He was on a walking tour.

1864] Letters of Dr. John Brown

CLXXIII. TO THE SAME

DOLGELLY, GOLDEN LION, 7th August 1864.

MY DEAR JOCKIE—We<sup>1</sup> have been up Cader Idris ; it took us 6 hours. We drove 3 miles, and then Mrs. Syme and Jim rode up, which is 3 miles, to the top. The view as we went up was magnificent, but the top was in a cloud. To-morrow we go to Barmouth on the shore of Cardigan Bay, and in the evening we hope to be at Aberystwyth. We have been very happy and enjoyed this beautiful country. I wonder if I will find a letter from you at Aberystwyth. I daresay, poor fellow, you have not much to say. . . . After Aberystwyth, we go to Ross and Tintern Abbey, and then home. I hope to be home at the farthest on Friday night. It is very strange not having Mama to come home to this time, but her being now happy in Heaven, and free from all pain, makes me more tranquil than I was last year, when I never knew what might happen, or how she was. Good-bye. I hope you have been giving Kent<sup>2</sup> a walk.—Your affect. father,  
J. BROWN.

CLXXIV. TO HIS DAUGHTER

DEVIL'S BRIDGE ! Sunday [8th Aug. 1864].

MY DEAR NELLY—Here we are, having come from Dolgelly yesterday morning, a most beautiful drive along the river and the sea to Barmouth, then through all sorts of changes of coaches and railways to Aberystwyth, having put in and taken out ourselves and things twelve times ! It is a famous bathing-place, Aberystwyth, but the Hotel was bad, and the place dull, and so after hearing a very good sermon on "Other foundation can no man lay, than that is laid, Christ Jesus," we started in a waggonette and pair to this place, 12 miles, of which 9 were uphill. This is a most singular place very high up among green hills, and then you come suddenly upon deep narrow rifts, down which the waters pour in all sorts of wild ways. There is one right opposite this room, and if you look at it long and get dreamy it is like a lady in white with her skirts flowing and her white feet peeping out every now and then, and her arms flung wildly about. . . . We leave this to-morrow for Aberystwyth railway station,

<sup>1</sup> The party included Professor Syme, his wife, and son.

<sup>2</sup> His dog.

## Letters of Dr. John Brown [1864

going 3 miles round to see Hafod, then we get to Shrewsbury at night, and next day to Ross and do the Wye and Tintern Abbey; and then I come home, I hope, on Thursday, but it may be Friday. We have had lovely weather and I have enjoyed myself more than I could have thought after what has happened to me. . . . My love to Jockie. Tell him I got the *Scotsmans* all right. I hope you are both well, and I am looking forward to our Braemar and Belleville expedition with great glee. Good-bye, my dearest wife.—Your affectionate father,  
J. B.

### CLXXV. TO HIS SISTER ISABELLA

ROYAL HOTEL, ROSS, 10th Augt., 7 A.M. [1864].

MY DEAREST ISABELLA—Here we are after many adventures, many Inns and much enjoyment, and the most perfect weather, raining only when we wanted it, to fill the cataracts (of the Devil, at Hafod) or lay the dust, or clear and cool the air. We came here yesterday from Shrewsbury, a fine brisk old town, to Ludlow, whose magnificent Castle and church and queer old inn we saw, and then on to Hereford, saw the Cathedral, which is being most carefully and expensively made a fool of with gaudy colours on the roof and floor. Then we drove to this lovely place, having taken the rail before. To-day we go to Chepstow and do Tintern Abbey. The finest things we have seen have been Llangollen, Cader Idris, and the view from its sides and shoulders—for his top was in a mist—the drive from Dolgelly to Barmouth, the Devil's Bridge and its waterfalls, and the view of Herefordshire and the Abergavenny Hills from the road last night.

I hope you and all mine and yours have been well. I shall be home on Friday at 9.40 A.M. by the Caledonian. Mr. Syme is coming with me. . . . I'll write Jane after I have seen the Wye and Tintern.

I hope poor Jockie has been getting out to Macbie Hill. Good-bye.—Yours ever affect.  
J. B.

### CLXXVI. TO THE SAME

MATLOCK, *Saty. Evening*, THE NEW BATHS HOTEL.  
[Aug. 1864].

MY DEAREST ISABELLA—We got here to-night, coming from Leamington by Rugby, Leicester, and Derby. This

1864] Letters of Dr. John Brown

is a lovely, quiet valley and unsophisticated place and people, a great relief from the splendours of Leamington, which, however, we enjoyed in its own way. The weather up to yesterday morning was rainy; since then it has been perfect, especially to-day. We have killed all the Warwickshire Lions; Warwick Castle is very noble, probably the finest thing of its kind in England. There is a wonderful portrait of Oliver Cromwell, so great and serious, and soft-hearted and good; Mr. Syme could not keep away from it—his grey, melancholy, commanding, perfectly *human* eyes. Yesterday we went to Stratford and saw where S. was born and buried—a blithe, old-fashioned townie; we saw it on Market day, the beer just the sort of thing he would drink and have his joke over. To-day we saw Kenilworth, majestic and sad and ruined—quite lovely, like my own dearest, when she was dead. Oh! how I mourn and am unsubmissive about not having her to show and share all these and many other things; but she no longer mourns, she knows even as she is known, and is filled with all the fulness of God. Write me a line here telling me all the news.

Good-night, my dearest Isabella.

J. B.

CLXXVII. TO HIS SISTER MRS. WILSON

*Sunday* [1864].

MY DEAREST JANE—We have been at Ross, and seen the sun set and the moon arise, and the stars, especially Him of Jove, shine out, and the river gleam, and the woods lie all about in deep shadow and love! and at Monmouth and the glorious Raglan, and down the Wye, and to the *disappointing* Tintern, which is just a Gothic, transcendental Barn; and we were on the Wyndcliffe and saw all the Kingdoms of the world and their glory. . . . I, my dear Jane, was happier, or was, at any rate less unhappy, than I could have thought,—more reconciled and patient, more thankful to God for present good and future hope. . . . Nelly is in Jed water. Jockie and Kent and Dick keep me company. Good-bye, my dear sister. I read with much delight Wordsworth's lines on revisiting Tintern Abbey, and was rejoiced to find he never mentions Tintern!

Yrs. and *Jacobus's Verus, dilectus necnon delectus, issimus-simus.*

J. B.

## Letters of Dr. John Brown [1864

Jacobus will translate, in any fashion *orally* he likes, the above.

We had such a capital sermon from Peter<sup>1</sup> on the word "But." *But* the word of the Lord grew and multiplied greatly.

### CLXXVIII. To JOHN DOWNES

23 RUTLAND STREET, EDINBURGH [1864].

MY DEAR FRIEND—Thanks for your kind and most comforting note. I had sunk into a sort of torpor, and your kind words made me grateful and stirred me up. What has happened—I mean Mrs. Brown's death—is much more felt now in its fulness and its minute fitting into every hour of my life, than at first. I have now time to be selfish and miserable, and to ply myself with reproaches—a very foolish, and indeed sinful exercise. I am very much pleased you like *Jeems*; that about the pillars of fire and cloud I thought at the time would perhaps be liked by you.

I have been thinking much lately of Jacob's wrestling with the Angel, finding his weakness and his strength at the same time, and going on through the rest of his life halting and rejoicing. I believe this is the one great lesson of life—the being *subdued by God*. If this is done all else is subdued, and won. I don't know if I sent you these two papers; I printed a few, and with respect to Kitty's I feel almost even to you as if she might be displeased at any one seeing what she designed only one should see. I wonder if I already sent you them. I am so forgetful now of everything. I hope to get to see you *next* week on Saty.—Yours ever affectly,  
J. BROWN.

I have mislaid my printed copies of these letters, so I send you Mr. Erskine's,<sup>2</sup> which you can give me when I come, and Helen's copy of her Mother's letter. What I value in it is its simple, sincere affection and sense of God, and of His love, at a time when she was only 22.—Yrs.  
J. B.

<sup>1</sup> The Rev. Peter Davidson, D.D.

<sup>2</sup> Thomas Erskine, LL.D., of Linlathen.

## 1864] Letters of Dr. John Brown

The following are the Letters referred to :—

### 1. MRS. BROWN TO MRS. LOGAN

BURNTISLAND, *14th September 1842.*

MY DEAR MRS. L.—From a letter I had this morning from Dr. John, I have learnt the sad, sad news that your dear James is gone. I feel as if I could not help writing a few words to you, just to tell how very much, how with my whole heart I sympathise with you, my dear friend. None but a mother can know a mother's sorrow; and yet what can I say to you? if I saw you I could only sit down and weep beside you. None but God who has stricken you can comfort you; I pray that His consolations may abound towards you, and that you may be made to feel, and to know more than ever, that wonderful love of God which passeth all knowledge. What a mercy it is that, when we go to Him in our time of distress, we have no need of words; we have only to throw ourselves at His feet! He knows all that we cannot express.

Dear, dear little James, the meek and gentle one! but think, my dear Mrs. L., how happy he now is, and what an escape he has made from all the pain and distress which have so long afflicted him, and which can never come near him more!

I have often thought, when full of fears lest my own Helen should be taken from me, that if we only could love our children without a reference to self, we would not grieve when they died in infancy, because at no future time of their lives can we be so sure of their eternal happiness; but oh! when the hour of bereavement actually comes, these thoughts have but little weight.

I know how you must feel,—how desolate, how bereaved, as if you had nothing now that could fill up your time and thoughts! Try to think of all the mercies you have yet left you. If I have said anything to hurt you, anything that you wish I had not said, will you forgive me?—it was far from my thoughts to do so. Will you present my kindest regards and sympathy to Mr. L.—you are both constantly on my mind. That God may bless you, my dear Mrs. L., and make *all* things work for your everlasting good, is the prayer of your true friend,

CATHERINE S. BROWN.

### 2. MR. ERSKINE TO DR. BROWN

3 CHARLOTTE SQUARE, *7th January 1864.*

Yes, my dear friend, I am sure you are nothing but grateful to God for her release. *He* had His own wise and loving purpose in detaining her here so long, in that state of mind which He had permitted and appointed, and she and you will doubtless one day know and rejoice in the accomplished effect of that purpose; but we can without hesitation acknowledge the mercy of her deliverance. What a

## Letters of Dr. John Brown [1864

blessed and glorious thing human existence would be, if we fully realised that the infinitely wise and infinitely powerful God loves each one of us with an intensity infinitely beyond what the most fervid human spirit ever felt towards another, and with a concentration as if He had none else to think of! It is to His hands that you have to trust her, and it is in His hands that she now is, always has been, and always will be. And this love has brought us into being, just that we might be taught to enter into *full sympathy* with Him, receiving His,—giving our own—thus entering into the joy of our Lord. This is the hope—the sure and certain hope—set before us—sure and certain—for “the mountains shall depart, and the hills be removed; but my kindness shall not depart, neither shall the covenant of my peace be removed, saith the Lord that hath mercy on thee.”

I always hope to be a better man by everything of the kind I hear—more free from the bondage of corruption, selfishness, and seen things; and more thoroughly possessed with the conviction that at every step in the journey of life I have the opportunity given me of being a fellow-worker with God in working out this great salvation.—Ever affectionately yours,  
T. ERSKINE.

### CLXXIX. To COVENTRY DICK

23 RUTLAND STREET, EDINBURGH, 21st August 1864.

Y DEAR COVENTRY—I had a talk with Jowett about the Establishments. I think you and he would much . Yes, I back that Paraphrase “I’m not ashamed,” etc.,<sup>1</sup> against Renan and all his crew. Have you read the *Apologia*? a very strange, sincere, insane, beautiful, painful performance and Confession it is. I am so glad I was grounded in historical Christianity in my youth, and am almost mechanically secured against these fellows and their guns and shells, their torpedos and mines.—Yours and all yours ever,

J. B.

### CLXXX. To LADY AIRLIE

23 RUTLAND STREET, EDINBURGH, 15th Sept. 1864.

MY DEAR LADY AIRLIE—I have to thank you for your Grouse. It becomes me to be especially grateful, as I don’t think any mortal so curiously enjoys these manly little fellows. I am curious to know what you think of Topsy. *Do not keep her if you do not like her.* I saw Lady Russell

<sup>1</sup> The Scottish Paraphrase, No. 54, beginning—

I’m not ashamed to own my Lord.



MRS BROWN

*From the first interview by Helen Brown, 1913*



## Letters of Dr. John Brown [1864

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<sup>1</sup> The Scottish Paraphrase, No. 54, beginning—

I’m not ashamed to own my Lord.



MRS BROWN

*As she first appeared by William Brown, 1891*

## Letters of Dr. John Brown [1864

happier man than for a while by this being so well, so blessedly over, by God's everlasting goodness and mercy. I shall be down soon now, probably *the week after next*.

Give Jane 4 kisses, one that her mother, one that her father, one that Kitty would have given her, had they been here, and 4th and lastly, and especially, one which awaits her when I see her motherly face and eyes. My love to faithful, happy Isabella, and may we all be the better of this which comes straight from God's hand.—Yrs. ever, J. BROWN.

Jockie was much excited and is greatly pleased in his solemn way.

### CLXXXII. To HIS BROTHER WILLIAM

23 RUTLAND STREET, EDINBURGH, *Saty.* [1864].

MY DEAR WM.—I hoped to have sent you Leech, but can't, I fear, till Monday. They have cut the life out of it by taking away the woodcut "*Fanny, how long have you been GAY?*" two beautiful and lost girls in the wind and rain in the Haymarket, at midnight. Of course I submitted, and it may be the prudent thing for the *Review*, but it makes me resolve never again to work *under* any man, but to do everything, if I ever do anything more, on my own hook and responsibility. This excision takes away the last proof and the strongest of Leech's *serious* purity of mind as well as of his tenderness. This writing for Reviews is bad for me in every way.—Yrs. and Maggy's ever, J. B.

### CLXXXIII. To LADY MINTO

23 RUTLAND STREET, *Octr.* 21st [1864].

MY DEAR LADY MINTO—I did not think I would have been so long of thanking you for your Dover letter; it was very good of you to put me so fully up to all your doings. I hope you have all prospered since, and that you have left the two cheery and well housed at Weimar. I heard a bit of a letter from Lord Lorne<sup>1</sup> read by his father the other day, giving a capital account of his own and Lord Melgund's Cambridge Life, with (to me) most touching and graphic sketches of *the Bull Dog* and the part he plays in Academic life. Lord Archibald is going to College here; he is a fine, manly fellow. They were telling me that Lady Airlie had

<sup>1</sup> Now Duke of Argyll.

got alarmed about that dear little woman<sup>1</sup> I fell in love with at Minto, and had taken her to London.

How queer it must feel for you when you are in your glorious places to picture the Minto Village and its old wives and all its ways! and yet you will wander far before you see anything so beautiful and fitting. I hope you have not been over-fatiguing yourself, and that Lord Minto has got stronger. Miss Elliot (the one I met at Minto) is here, and I took her yesterday to see Noel Paton's Studio; she is full of art. But you have been feasting doubtless on Venice and Tintoretto, Titian and Veronese. I wonder if I shall ever find myself mooning about in the front of St. Mark's. I made a short run last week into Galloway to see my sister and her baby. I had been mean and lazy enough never to go to see her in her Manse at New Abbey, and now that the baby is come I could not but go, and a famous little Galwegian he is. She lives in a lovely, old-fashioned, out-of-the-way place 7 miles from Dumfries, on the Solway, at the foot of Criffel, with the glorious Cumberland hills opposite. My two are well. Nelly was a month in the Highlands. John is busy with his buying and selling, and grows up a good, truthful, sensible boy, with to me a quite inestimable likeness to his mother. And now you must be pretty well tired of this long string of nothings. Give my best regards to yourself and Lord Minto, Mr. and Mrs. Elliot, and the dear children. Where and how is

#### PUNCH?

Lady Airlie was delighted with a Judy<sup>2</sup> I sent her very like your potentate. My mastiff is growing magnificent, and will be in full glory when you come back, for which time not a few of us weary already.—Yours ever, J. BROWN.

#### CLXXXIV. TO LADY AIRLIE

23 Rutland Street, Edinburgh, 19 Nov. 1864.

DEAR LADY AIRLIE Thanks very much, but it is impossible next week, so strictly impossible, as to be a sort of comfort, but if you will let me, I would like to come up some day before Christmas, and I would like it all the better that you had nobody with you. What a strange life up where you are, to you fresh from the warm, big Alderley

<sup>1</sup> Lady Clementine Ogilvy, daughter of Lady Airlie.

<sup>2</sup> A dog.

## Letters of Dr. John Brown [1864

flock ; but you can carry your pleasures with you, I suspect, more than most. I could not help telling the patient wife<sup>1</sup> at Holly Lodge that I had been the better of her mother. I don't think you need change your way of thinking and feeling much, or as much as our wise friend with that plain shrewd face, those kind, truthful, strong eyes, and that romantic and (once) abnormal heart, has needed to do. It is a queer world, and we are always being disillusioned, but I think we come to find out that we are fully as happy in seeking to enjoy and promote the happiness of others, as in hunting wildly for our own. I have given up the idea of *immediate* pleasure in this world, and am at least more contented, if less acutely happy than of old ; and I do think that having found that this same "bliss," as we used to call it, is not to be found here, we come to be all the more sure that it is waiting for us elsewhere, if we do but do our best here. What a sermon I have dropped into ! You must forgive me. Say to Lord Airlie he must keep his Yankee Stories *warm*.

I hope you got comfortably home. Have you seen Miss Cornwallis' *Letters* ? a very remarkable woman, though a little uncomfortable to herself and others, and a little too audacious, now and then. She wrote these "Small Books on Great Subjects,"<sup>2</sup> which were much thought of at the time, and always considered a man's work.—Ever, dear Lady Airlie, yours truly,

J. BROWN.

### CLXXXV. To THE SAME

23 RUTLAND STREET, EDINBURGH,  
2 P.M., *Saty.* [Decr. 1864].

MY DEAR LADY AIRLIE—I know you will believe how bitter and hard it was for me to send a telegram instead of myself. I only knew quite shortly before that I could not come. I am quite vexed for you, for I know what a tiresome sort of thing it is. And I had a selfish reason for coming. I knew I would be happy and interested, and I have been going wrong with my sleep, and the time is coming round when my wife died, and the days standing out, the very sounds of last year coming into my ears, the past domineering over me, and I thought I

<sup>1</sup> Lady Clementine Ogilvy. Holly Lodge, the town house of Earl of Airlie.

<sup>2</sup> A series published by Pickering.

1864] Letters of Dr. John Brown

would get some Highland sleep and forget myself. How is Clementine? Miss Graham is very well and looking quite beautiful, a little crept down, shorter and less stout, but full of life and love. The Duchess of Argyll has got to Erskine. I heard from her to-day in good spirits. I had a long pleasant letter yesterday from Lady Minto, from Naples. You will see in to-day's *Scotsman* a bit from it upon Italy and Rome.

It is more a vexation than I care to tell, this same not getting to Cortachy. I was going to have a long confidential talk with the Coachman, from Glammis to you, and to-morrow I meant in a pair of tacketed shoon to have explored some Grampian, but surely this may be true some other day. Thank you for giving me this chance, and for all your kind things to me. I do think they are not thrown away. Tell the Earl to keep his Yankee stories in some secure place. The best way of remembering them is to repeat them. Would he not give us here, in the *Scotsman*, a sketch of what he saw and heard and thought?—Yours ever, dear Lady Airlie, truly and discontentedly,

J. BROWN.

CLXXXVI. TO LADY TREVELYAN

*Decr. 1864.*

MY DEAR LADY TREVELYAN—It is very pleasant to get your own handwriting again. I can realise now how frightened I was that I would never again see it. You don't know what a loss that would be to me *now*. May we all be thankful to God for His great goodness in keeping you to us. It was so good of you to write—quite as good, let me tell your convalescent Ladyship, as Ruskin writing you, any way. Why shouldn't he? and what else has he to do? I see he is fighting away in his insolent and magnificent way in *The Reader* about his glaciers. I am sure he has wings under his flannel jacket; he is not a man, but a stray angel, who had singed his wings a little and tumbled into our sphere. He has all the arrogance, insight, unreasonableness, and spiritual "sheen" of a celestial. Have you seen young Swinburne's Poems? I am going to get them to-day. . . .

I am glad you are on your way to Seaton—though it be so far away. — is queer and good, and would worry me; I like her in my mind better than in my room—is this a

## Letters of Dr. John Brown [1864

mean saying? Nelly and John are well. I am pretty fairish—very busy—but feeling more lonely than ever. I dread the coming round of the day; I am fuller of her and her faithfulness and loveliness and dearness than I was months ago. I am republishing *Locke and Sydenham*; it has been much asked for, and she always liked it best, and encouraged me to write it; and I have a sort of silly wish to put her name into it, but very likely I shall not. I thought of something like this:

Patronae meae et uxori—

Tibi, Catharina mea!

Pulchra, pia, semper carissima, evanesca donec aspires dies et fugiant umbrae. Tibi has Chartulas, te assidente scriptas, dico.

I found the report of my marriage here on my return from you; I think it is put out now. I was so shocked and hurt about it; you will, I know, give it the lie wherever you meet it.

I have been reading Lord Derby's *Iliad*; it is a great performance, especially for a gouty and luxurious Earl. It is fresh and vigorous, clear and *modest*—and very compact; but to be a great translator of a poem a man must be himself a poet, and that his Lordship is not. Therefore I like Cowper's the best of them all yet. If Tennyson would do it, and do it slackly and loosely, that would be glorious; but we have got too much into essences, and our poetry is not so much a rich generous wine, which one may take a good pull at, but a liqueur. My best regards to the good and energetic Howison and to Sir Walter. I shall hear about you soon. My biggest love to my Constance.—Yours ever affectionately,

J. BROWN.

### CLXXXVII. To JOHN SKELTON

MANCHESTER, 13th August [1865].

MY DEAR SKELTON—You occurred to me whenever I heard of poor Aytoun's death. You should have a good chance, and I am sure you would make a good, indeed a first-rate teacher, as well as prelector. You would make them understand the value of style and expression as well as of thought and feeling, and you would teach by example as well as precept. But I am not going to take any active part in this election. I have already refused even to give testimonials,



DR JOHN BROWN IN 1866.  
From a photograph taken at Ambleside



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and so many men are, like yourself, personal friends, that I mean to stick to this and make no exception. Besides, I detest the testimonial system as at present worked. It is vicious, degrading, and deluding. One or two good names for reference, and above all your own work already done, this is all you should think of. Of course, if the Advocate or Sir G. Grey ask me my opinion, I shall then give it strongly enough.

Dallas, Nichol, George Macdonald are already in the field, and have all applied to me.

I have been having a delightful run with Syme through Warwick and Derby-shires, and am on my way to the Lakes for a day or two. I'll see you when I come to town, which will be on Friday evening. Now I know you will not take offence at what I have written. I may be able to do you more good in a quiet way.—Yours ever truly, J. BROWN.

CLXXXVIII. To HIS DAUGHTER

[On her engagement.]

23 RUTLAND STREET, EDINBURGH, 9th Novr. 1865.

MY OWN DEAREST CHILD—May God bless, for ever, you and him, and make you blessings and helps to each other. This I know is what your dear Mother would have said, and for anything we know she may know this about her child, whom she loved, and for whom she had many a thought for her future years. I got a great shock at first. Captain Law behaved *very well*, and it is nice his having liked you all this while and longed to see you. You must love him with all your heart and soul, and study him, and always speak and be the truth to him; that is the thing to make your lives happy. I liked him—his quiet ways. I like big men, and I like Army men—when they are good. Give him my best regards, and say we shall be very happy to have him here on Tuesday. Jackie somehow had some suspicion; I had none. You can tell me all when I see you. So good-bye, my own darling little woman. I bless God for this, and pray it may be for your and his true, lifelong happiness and good.—Yrs. ever, J. B.

## Letters of Dr. John Brown [1866]

### CLXXXIX. To MRS. BROWN'S AUNT, MRS. MOLTENO

23 RUTLAND STREET, EDINBURGH [May 9th, 1866].

MY DEAR AUNT—Thanks for your kind note. You are not a “useless personage,” and we ought all to be proud of you, and grateful to God for letting us have you so long. I never think of you as a bit older than when you were at Kilbucho! I am sorry at your losing Mrs. Molteno. There comes a time when we must lose more than we can gain. I shall tell Isabella; I am sure she will be happy to write you a family letter. She is taken up with flitting from dear Arthur Lodge. Alexr. is going to get married to a sister of Professor Tait's wife, Jane Porter, quite a fine creature. . . . Our Wedding went off very happily, if not very hilariously. I am sure all present felt the gentle shadow of death over them, deepening the seriousness without impairing the real joy and thankfulness of our hearts, when we thought of her, the dearest who is in her grave, and to whom this event would have been so full of interest and happiness—for our Captain is just the kind of man she would have prayed God to give her child to. . . . 1st, we went to the chapel, and Mr. Faithfull, Helen's minister, married them. Heleny came downstairs to me looking very sweet in her plain corded silk; she couldn't speak, but she pointed to a little Diamond locket I had given her, with her Mother's initials, as much as to say “That is it,” and then she told me not to speak a word to her, and Robert (our Coachman) drove us off to the Chapel. Next week I must attend a meeting of the Education Committee.<sup>1</sup> I *must* go to London soon, however, as I have been prevailed on to undertake a Life of John Leech, and must see his family and sisters. Have you seen *Ecce Homo*? If not, I can send it over to you. Good-bye, my dear, dear Aunt; my best love to Uncle and the two at Newton. I am much better, and am glad this Wedding is over.—Yours affectly., J. B.

### CXC. To HIS SISTER ISABELLA

8 SUFFOLK STREET [LONDON], 29th May [1866].

MY DEAR ISABELLA—I suppose you have heard of Helen's taking the Measles; she was very poorly from the time I came, and on Sabbath this was explained by the rash coming

<sup>1</sup> He had recently been appointed a member of a Committee to inquire into Education in Scotland.

out, and she has been in bed and very sharply ill, poor wife. It is very vexatious to them, as they hoped to have been with the old people to-morrow or Thursday. I also must wait and see her better. I have been going about and people are very kind, but I don't like this huge place; it excites and depresses me, and makes me quite nervous and useless. I would gladly have run away home as soon as I came up. My nerves are shattered for life; I feel, and I can't say I am sorry for it, now that life is getting less and less to me. I dined at Dean Stanley's yesterday—quite a homely, pleasant party. Dean Milman and his wife, Mr. Grote the historian and his, a big, queer, strong woman, and Dr. and Mrs. Vaughan of Doncaster. I told him how much you liked his books; he is just like them, simple and *boylike*, earnest and quiet. She is a sister of Stanley's, and quite as nice. I met also Lady Augusta's sister, Lady (Something) Baillie.<sup>1</sup> I called with Mr. Syme on Carlyle, and had a long, very interesting, and at last quite cheery, talk *from* him. Poor fellow, it is most affecting to see his face when at rest, such utter sadness. I'll tell you about him. I lunched with the Speaker and his wife, Lady Charlotte Denison, good, kindly people; he got me into the House of Commons, and I heard and saw a brisk, damaging skirmish, and heard short, fierce speeches from all the great guns. Mrs. Grote, who was in, told me afterwards, she had made them get it up for my pleasure!

I have been at the Pictures and Music places, and out at Andrew's, and much with the Heughs. But my greatest pleasure has been with the Leech family—father, mother, and 5 daughters all as good as he was. I am going to dine at Lady Minto's on Thursday, and shall meet, I suppose, the Russells and a lot of people, and on Saturday I go to the Duchess of Argyll's. All this I enjoy, but with a queer feeling of only being half up to it all.

Good-bye, and write me, and tell Alexr. to have compassion on me. I often think of you and all this late and present trying time. God bless and *pity* us all. J. B.

## CXCI. TO SIR THEODORE MARTIN

NEW ABBEY, 1st October [1866].

MY DEAR FRIEND—Thanks very much for yours. I wish I could help you, but I can't. I knew Aytoun very little. I have no doubt you are right in saying his best things were

<sup>1</sup> Lady Frances Anne Baillie.

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his first. It was very sad to see and to read him of late years. The paper on George Eliot is by Henry Lancaster, and is, I think, able, acute and just. He will be glad to know that you like it. He takes the side of the few as yet. It has been somewhat disgusting, the praise of the naughty, strong-headed Mrs. George, who has, I think, fully as much talent as genius. "Keble" is by Professor Shairp, and has, I believe, given great pleasure to Judge Coleridge and Keble's oldest friends. The bit on John Henry Newman and the last pages on great Nature's *unsympathising* face are nobly done. There is a very good paper on sermons by Miss Merivale. The paper on George Macdonald is by young Kinnear. I am glad you are well and thinking of slipping a little out of the Maelstrom of London. *Felix tu!* with your *modus agri*. Good-bye.—With duty to the Lady Helen, yours ever,  
J. BROWN.

### CXCII. To HIS DAUGHTER

HÔTEL DES ANGLAIS, NICE, 31st Octr. [1866].

MY DEAREST HELEN—I hope I may have a letter from you, and perhaps from the good-natured Alec, at San Remo. We have lovely skies day and night; and the blueness—its crystalline pureness and depth—of the sea is every day more and more wonderful. I have been, however, very ill with a feverish cold, headache and often toothache, and general unwellness ever since I left London. I thought last night I must get rid of my tooth, which is my last available grinder.

MY DEAR ALEC—This is a wonderfully beautiful region, but for an old Scotch fogey it has too much sun and glare, too few clouds and too little smoke; the windows are all closed, and the chimneys send up nothing indicating the ongoings of human life; but the sea is marvellously beautiful in its deep and every moment varying blue. Even when there are no clouds its hues change and move and tremble over it as if it were alive and having its own moods, and its shore is always so clean. Last night, when I could not sleep for toothache, I heard it (it is just across the road from the Hotel) as if it were some mighty creature SNORING, the measured pauses of the sleepy waves and their sound on the shingle being exactly like this. Since L. Napoleon got this place, he has set it in order and rules everything and renovates too, as in Paris and over all France. It is wonderful, but he is not liked, and the people are Italian in heart

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as mostly in language. He has in the most considerate (!) manner built a fort a little outside, by which he could shell the city in an hour. This is a cheerful little object from the Place Royal, but he is greatly improving the material prosperity of the place and country. I don't know if you or the General<sup>1</sup> were ever here. I do hope it may do pitiful and dilapidated me some good.

CXCIII. To HIS SON

SAN REMO, *Tuesday, 7 A.M.* [1866].

MY DEAR JOHN—You will now be at Rillbank Terrace, I hope. Thank Jane for her nice letter; if she thinks it a poor letter, tell her I don't wish the next one any richer, but she must write me very soon giving a full account of Alexander's opening day, of his state of mind and body, etc. This is a lovely morning; they are all lovely, and I have been watching the sun rise on the sea since before daybreak, and trying to see Corsica, which is straight opposite, but we have never seen its wild outline; it has a mountain 9000 and more feet high. Sunday was a sort of National fête all over Italy for the liberation of Venice, and there was a picturesque illumination here, with their coloured paper Lanthorns, generally green, white, and red, the Italian Colours; but the people are not enthusiastic. They hate the French, through whom Venice has come to them, and they are ashamed of the part Italy has played in the late war. They are good, industrious, kindly people, none very rich but none very poor, and almost every one having a bit of ground with a few olive trees, each of which is worth about 3 francs (2/6) a year. Yesterday we set out on an expedition with Dr. Panizzi, a great friend of Ruffini, who wrote *Dr. Antonio*, to Taggia, Ruffini's birthplace, where his brother and mother died, and where he still has two houses, one in the town and the other a little villa in his Olive and Orange ground. We were in his little garden where "Lucy Davenne" (in the story) met "Signora Eleanora," Ruffini's mother. You must read the story immediately. If you have read it, and remember the Marchesa (or Marchioness) who gave up her box in the little theatre of Taggia to Lucy Davenne, you will like to know that her son was married on Sunday to an American lady, a Miss Jefferson Page!

<sup>1</sup> Captain Law's father.

## Letters of Dr. John Brown [1866

There is a long bridge across the Argentina, the wild mountain stream coming down the deep and grand Alpine valley on which Taggia stands. At the end of this bridge is the finest orange orchard we have seen. Well, we crossed this bridge over the dry bed of the river (this gives such an ugly look now to this beautiful country, the want of running water, and the great, gaping, empty beds of the river), and began an ascent through the Olivers (as C. B.<sup>1</sup> calls the Olive trees for shortness) up a steep paved narrow way passable only by men and mules, to Castellaro, a little town with its two or more high churches. It is perched some 1000 feet on the steep hill, and from it we wound up 200 more feet to the Sanctuary of Mary of Lampedusa, famous all over Italy, and the story about which you will find in *Dr. Antonio*. We also saw a winking virgin in Taggia. She only winks occasionally, and the appearance of it is said to be owing to some way the light falls in the eyes; it is not a trick of the priests. This statue is very beautiful, though coloured, and represents the Virgin and our Lord and St. Catherine. I bought a rude olive pipe for you here; we all bought something. We then came down and recrossed the long winding bridge, and went and saw the town house of Ruffini; very curious the pictures of Edinburgh and the Calton Hill which had belonged to Agostino his brother, who taught Italian there. I forgot to say, we went through the Sanctuary at Lampedusa and saw the picture of the Virgin, which the shipwrecked and enslaved sailor had carried across the sea in his boat from Lampedusa, an Island on the coast of Africa. But what astonished and delighted us most was the view down and up the great glen; quite wonderful down was the open sea, and up the wildest mountains with trees, olive, chestnut, and mulberry (these two bright orange and greatly relieving the sombre olives), and, which is rare here, there were clouds and mists just like the Highlands, the sunlight here and there, and touching up the stone pines and the solitary white houses up to nearly the tops of the hills. This was one of the finest sights we have seen. We came back in time for dinner at 6, greatly pleased with our expedition, and with our two friends, Dr. Martini of Taggia, a dark, sad, quiet man, and Dr. Panizzi, also dark, but lively and very pleasant—both perfect gentlemen. I hope you are well and not dull. I wish I could say there was any improvement in me. I long for and dread coming home. I hope poor Kent got off at last. Send this to Nelly and say

<sup>1</sup> Dr. Charles Barclay, of the Indian Medical Service.

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I'll write her very soon. Give Aunt Isabella my love and say how glad I was to get her letter. I'll try and write her soon too. My tremendous respects to "Crum Brown" and my love to Jane, whom I am sure you will like. . . .—Yours ever,  
J. B.

Remember me very much to Mrs. Cunningham and Mrs. Barclay.

CXCIV. To THE SAME

NICE, 8th Novr. [1866].

MY DEAR JOHN—We went last night from Mentone to Monte Carlo, about 6 miles off. . . . I was sorry we went, as, with all its splendour and fine music, it is a horrible place. We saw a boy not seventeen staking at one time 150 Louis, that is about £120, and George Barclay saw a lad win at one haul £900. It is in a most lovely and romantic place on a bay on the sea, with wooded hills and huge grey limestone Mountains in the background. I hope you are still at Rillbank Terrace.<sup>1</sup> It is raining a little to-day, quite a rarity. Yesterday in San Remo it was 110 in the sun, and only 65 in the shade.

The drive back to-day from Mentone to Nice was as fine and nearly as striking as going: it is the most wonderful bit of road I have ever seen, and to-day the sea was quite calm. Good-night, my dear John.—Yrs.,  
J. B.

CXCV. To MRS. MOLTENO

23 RUTLAND STREET, EDINBURGH, 26th December [1866].

MY DEAREST AUNT—Your kind letter of this morning made my cheeks glow with shame. It has been very unkind and ungrateful, my never answering your last; my only reason, though it is no excuse, is the depression and hopelessness in which my everyday life is now steeped, so that I have no pleasant thoughts for any one, and if I write a letter I must "make conversation." I was off with George and Charles Barclay in October for a month, in the South of France, and as far as San Remo on the Riviera, 40 miles east of Nice. If change and glorious scenery, the blue Mediterranean and a cloudless heaven could have cheered me, I would have been cheered, and even as it was it diverted me from myself, at

<sup>1</sup> Professor Crum Brown's house.



## Letters of Dr. John Brown [1866

times. We went to Paris, then Lyons and down the noble valley of the Rhone to Marseilles, then to Cannes, where I planted an orange and a daisy in Lord Brougham's grounds, then Nice and over the Corniche Road to Mentone, and then to our ultimatum San Remo. We were in Dr. Antonio's country and read him over again. By the bye, did you or Margaret or Kitty ever read a story called *Mademoiselle Mori*? If not, try and get it. I think it perfect, and one of the few novels I have been able to read. The lines your wonderful memory poured out are by Horace Smith, and appeared first in the *New Monthly Magazine*; they are very fine, and have long been cherished by me. Have you seen Whately's *Life* by his daughter? There is much that is interesting in it; such a cordial, gnarled original he was, and so full of rugged tenderness and generosity and oddities of all sorts. I often wish I could make myself come over for a day and see you all once more, but day after day passes in stupid indifference and wretchedness, idle remorse, useless wishings for the impossible and the lost. God and His love are to be had for the asking, *but they must be asked*. My love to your ever dear good self, and to Uncle and to Margaret and Kitty.—  
Yrs. ever affectly., J. B.

### CXCVI. To MISS JESSIE CRUM

23 RUTLAND STREET, EDINBURGH, *Friday* [Jan. 25, 1867].

Thank you, my dear Jessie, for this and the other letter. I wish Mr. Ker<sup>1</sup> would do your bidding, and print some of his sermons. I only heard him once, with Aunt James, but it was such a sermon as it is a serious thing to have heard. He seems to me such a *plump*, well-rounded, well-fulfilled mind and nature, such a true harmony of opposites or rather different, so much keen, deep, hard understanding, with such deep softness and feeling, such a power of compassion and sympathy. I liked his Voluntary pamphlet best at first. I somehow think there is, what is so rare in him, a little haziness; I want him and all on that side to say simply, that a magistrate has nothing to do with religion except to be religious, a very full and sufficient "except." He has no more, and quite as much, to do with Christianity than and as a shoemaker has.

<sup>1</sup> Dr. John Ker, afterwards Professor of Practical Training in the United Presbyterian College, Edinburgh.

## 1868] Letters of Dr. John Brown

### CXCVII. To HIS SISTER ISABELLA

PORT SONACHAN, *Tuesday* [August 1868].

MY DEAR ISABELLA—I found your letter and the papers here when we arrived about 11. We left Glenlyon at 6 yesterday morning, and got the Coach on Loch Tay about 8, then to Killin and Crianlarich; here it began to rain, and was very wet to Dalmally—an ugly old house. There were with us from Loch Tay two very pleasant people, a Mr. Atkins and his wife from Southampton. To-day has been rather better but cloudy; Ben Cruachan has not disclosed himself. . . . Yesterday when the Glencroe coach drove up from Loch Lomond, who should be on the box seat but Sir George Harvey, his face shining with rain, and beaming with delight; he was on his way to the Blackmount to sketch. This morning, as John and I were looking out at this little inn's window on the ferry, whom did we see crossing in the boat but the President, and he is sleeping here to-night, happy as a boy, little knowing the manner of man of whom he is the friend.

John is well, and likes this place.—Yrs. ever from him  
and me, and the President, J. B.

### CXCVIII. To HIS DAUGHTER

THUN, 31st August [1868].

MY DEAREST HELEN—Here I am in a Pension 3 miles from Thun, where we are boarded for 3 francs a day, everything. We came up here to see Mr. Ruffini, the author of *Dr. Antonio*. He is very pleasant, though sad; there is a fine old Lady, Mrs. Turner, with him. Through an opening in an apple tree, I see one of the Alps, white and wonderful. The view of the Bernese Alps from this is very fine. I left Edinburgh a fortnight ago, for Antwerp and Cologne, up the Rhine to Mainz, then to Bâle and Geneva, which is the grandest and loveliest piece of the world I have ever seen. The blue of the Lake wonderful, like sapphire.

We have had very good weather. On Wednesday we sailed up the lake to Vevey, then took a carriage to Aigle and across the country by beautiful wild valleys to Interlaken on Friday night. Next day we went up to Grindelwald and saw 2 glaciers, and 3 Alps quite close, the lowest 10,000

## Letters of Dr. John Brown [1868

done, great good by these strong, simple, reverent truths. I wish you could see your way to give to this outcoming record of your works (imperfect though it be in quality and quantity, still a just and surprising record) a few pages of yourself on your Art, and your own mastery of it; *do think of this, and do it*. It would give great life and power and personal charm to the whole book. Have you read Lord Bute's address in to-day's paper? It is excellent, and he is beginning well.

He is so right in taking that definition of Art, the manifestation of the beautiful, but then it should be felt not only at the eye or ear, but should penetrate to the centre, to the soul, and it—this of beauty—contains all beauty outward and inward, the beauty of the good, the strong, the tender, the pure, the true; the beauty of holiness, in a true and humble sense. I cannot but rejoice to read such things coming from you as this same most delightful address. Tell the children to be sure to preserve it.—Yours and theirs ever,  
J. B.

### CCII. To HIS SISTER MRS. WILSON

[1869.]

MY DEAR JANE—We had a delightful couple from America with us for two hours on Sunday night, Mr. and Mrs. Fields of Boston. He is the crack bookseller, the John Murray, or rather his partner Mr. Ticknor and he are the Blackwoods of America. He met William in the Railway at Melrose, and asked him quite casually, if he knew the author of *Rab*. William laughed and told them, and gave them a letter to me. I have not for years seen two more likeable people. They sail this week for New York with Mrs. Stowe, who is a great friend. They are abolitionists. They reprinted *Rab* a year ago, and he says sold many thousands, besides many other editions by other booksellers.—Yours and James's ever affectly.

### CCIII. To LADY MINTO

23 RUTLAND STREET, EDINBURGH [1869].

DEAR LADY MINTO—I don't think I could contrive anything better, or better for me, than to come out to you for a Minto Sunday,—if anything can ever do me any good, or

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lift me out of my hopeless self. But I do not see how I can get away for Sunday. There is a great deal of sickness, but the one impossible thing is the leaving Lord Barcaple. I have great fears for him. It would be the greatest loss to the Scotch Bench, and through that to the nation, that could at present be. If I cannot run out, I will be, as I always am, happy to hear from you. I blame myself often for missing so many opportunities of seeing you all together.

I had a letter the other day from Lady Thomson, wife of Sir William Thomson,<sup>1</sup> the great Natural Philosopher and electrician. She is one of the finest creatures I ever knew, sincere and bright and very keen-minded, and with a true insight into the real worth of things and thoughts. This is what she says, "I am enjoying very much now reading *Hugh Elliot's Life*. His bright, quick, eager, mobile character is most interesting, and from her way of writing I should think his granddaughter must have inherited his deep and charming qualities."

Lady Airlie is here. I am to dine with her to-night at Miss Stirling Graham's. My best thanks for your note.—  
Yours and Lord Minto's ever truly, J. BROWN.

I have some hopes of getting a doggie for Lady Elliot.

CCIV. To PROFESSOR SELLAR

23 RUTLAND STREET, EDINBURGH, 10th July [1869].

MY DEAR SELLAR—Thanks for yours. It is a wonderful place where you are. That huge, tragic-looking Glas Maol has always had some strange hold on my imagination, and the expedition you and Mrs. Sellar are meditating is the way to see all its glories. You will be delighted with Clova; it is like nothing else in Scotland. I wish I were with you, but my life is spent in idly wishing that what has been, had never been—rather a silly and dismal occupation. I shall see your mother to-day or to-morrow. I have no news of men or books. I can't read. Last night I stuck in M. Arnold's brilliant and procacious lecture. The man is so strong in his writings, his individuality never deserts his words. I saw Alexander yesterday, looking very hearty. . . .

I hope Mrs. Sellar has had no headaches. My love to her and the children.—Yours ever truly, J. BROWN.

<sup>1</sup> Now Lord Kelvin.

# Letters of Dr. John Brown [1869]

## CCV. To MISS EPPIE SELLAR

SCURMORE HOUSE, Co. SLIGO [1869].

MY DEAR LITTLE WIFIE—Will you thank Papa for his letter and say that when I get home I'll do what I can for his "Terrier." Say to him that his "touch of the Collie" is a touch of genius. And you were on the top of the Glas Maol! and all that great world you saw was pictured in your eyes, and I daresay you had your own views of what you saw, and your own notions of everything. I found small Nelly very well, much better than for many months. It is a sweet cheery place which it is not easy to describe—a good house, on a lovely green field that goes down to the sea, at least to the edge of a creek where the sea comes and goes. This gives perpetual life to the place, and there are sea-gulls and curlews and crows always wheeling about and hunting on the sands, and between us and the sea is a funny peninsula of sandhills which our Ulysses of a Captain calls Little Egypt; and if we could put up two or three picture palm trees and a few wooden camels it *would* be Egypt, quite. The Atlantic is not seen from the house, but is heard, I can tell you, whenever he is stirring, and when he is angry his roaring is awfully grand. On the Croquet ground just now is big (and privately to yourself *stupid*) Kent, whose head has absorbed all his grandeur, and near him is a forlorn Muscovy Duck, who is a Drake, and who even in his sleep laments his wife whom he lost a year ago. You never saw such a mourner. Nelly sends her love, very much; she wishes she were nearer you. We had a small dinner-party yesterday. Nelly had on *the Sellar Jewels*. My love to dear Grandmama if she is with you. My John is away walking in the Highlands with 2 chums. Good-bye again, my dear little Wifie, God bless you always and much. Are you tired of all this? I am sure you are. Give Mama my best love and ask Papa for a kiss from me, which I shall repay with interest, and lovelets to Nelly and Flossy and the strict lady, and my cordiality to W A L T E R.

There is a cat here that has had 64 kittens, and is as giddy as the last one.

## 1870-1879

After recovering from the break-down in his health in 1866, Dr. Brown was able to resume his medical practice, but so many of his patients were also his intimate friends, that it was sometimes difficult to distinguish between professional visits and those of friendship. There was no fear of Dr. Brown overcharging; fees had very nearly to be forced upon him. He arranged with his friend Sir George Harvey, that if he left his hat in the hall he came as his medical attendant, if he held it in his hand as a friend. But after this was settled, he so often entered the room hat in hand, that something like a skirmish often took place, Dr. Brown resenting Sir George's efforts to transfer the hat to the hall table. On April 22, 1874, the Senatus of Edinburgh University conferred on Dr. Brown the degree of LL.D.

The next day he was tired and dejected. He told a friend who came to see him, that it was quite absurd to have given him that degree: it implied some amount of learning, "And I have none—none." "Perhaps," was the reply, "in your case LL.D. means *loved*, not *learned*." He stopped his slow walk up and down the room, and facing round said, "That is perfectly true, I am far more loved than I deserve" (with a dawning smile); "I ought to try to stop it." "You may find it difficult," was the rejoinder.

As he grew older, the fact that so many of his patients were also dear and valued friends added greatly to his feeling of responsibility, and the burden weighed upon him. There was a recurrence of nervous illness in 1876, and in April that year he sent out the following circular:—

" 23 RUTLAND STREET, 29 *Ap.* 1876.

"With heartfelt thanks to my patients and friends for all their great kindness and consideration towards me during the time I have been their Doctor, I find myself now under the necessity of intimating that, owing to the state of my health, I am, with deep regret, obliged from this date to discontinue ordinary medical practice.

J. BROWN."

## Letters of Dr. John Brown [1870]

His friends felt that now was the time when some practical demonstration could be given of the love and honour in which he was held. No appeal was made, not a single word was printed, but it was whispered from friend to friend that a testimonial in money was being collected. In a very short time a sum was secured that removed any shade of anxiety as to the future.

Though from this time Dr. Brown technically retired from the work of his profession, his days were spent much as before. He did not take charge of any anxious cases, but very many of his old friends still eagerly expected visits, and he did not disappoint them. Some months each summer were spent with the Barclay family by the Spey or the Tweed or in the Isle of Arran, and occasionally he took short trips—once to Skye with “J. T. B. and his brother.”

### CCVI. To HIS SON

GALLOWAY ARMS, NEWTON STEWART, *Sunday* [April 1870].

MY DEAR JOHN—We came here last night from Kirkcudbright. On Friday morning we started from Dalbeattie in a waggonette, and went along a very picturesque road to Dundrennan Abbey, a fine ruin. We saw the burying-place of Lord Barcaple's father and people. . . . Yesterday morning we left in a waggonette and drove up the Dee (it is very beautifully wooded all about K.) to Barcaple, such a pleasant, half-highland place, such a plain gentlemanly place, so like himself, everything essential first-rate, no superfluities or show, beautiful grounds and offices. His old brother was away to meet Miss Maitland and her sister at the train at Castle-Douglas. It was very sad to be in the place where I and you might have been years ago, and where your mother might have been. I was glad I didn't see them. We then drove across a high ridge with a great view of the big hills, all heathery and rocky, and came to Gatehouse-on-the-Fleet, a pretty little town, called so from being at the Gate of Cally, a grand house with its grounds, belonging to Murray of Broughton, whose Ancestor was the abhorred traitor in the Rebellion,<sup>1</sup> and on whom the curse was pronounced that no son or son's son

<sup>1</sup> Of 1745.

should ever inherit; and so it has turned out ever since. The present man has no children, and it goes away to some distant man. We then started off along the Coast for Ravenshall, a little roadside inn close to Dirk Hatteraick's cave, and an old castle, the original of Ellangowan. The rocks and coast are very fine. We thought of sleeping and spending to-day there, but that was impossible. We got poached eggs and cheese and scones and *Robert Younger's* excellent ale. We (G. and J. B.) have been drinking much whisky, and J. B. actually smoked yesterday morning. We then drove on to Creetown, intending to get a dog-cart and go on to this place, but the cart was there, the horse not, so we had to wait 2 hours till the train. I superintended a game at "Bools" (marbles) in the street, and saw justice done, with some difficulty. We had a mile and a half to walk to the station, and we saw a pretty little dark-eyed girl of 12 and her little brother going up. I spoke to her, and found she was going to meet her father and brother, who were coming home from Berwickshire, where they had been stone-dyking since October. She said if they didn't come, they wouldn't be for a month, and her earnestness was wonderful. They didn't come, so we comforted her and the small boy with a shilling, a sixpence, and twopence. We got here past 9; it (the Galloway Arms) is very old, but very clean and well-appointed, with a wonderfully grand little sitting-room. Mrs. Barclay is with us. I was afraid the journeying and roughing would be too much for her, but she says she is better. G. B. is off to get his oppressive energy out in a long strenuous walk. I don't know where we shall be to-morrow night, probably Port Patrick or Stranraer. We shall then turn and get to Jane's on Tuesday night or Wednesday. Good-bye, my dearest John.—  
Yours, J. B.

## CCVII. To Miss SOMERVILLE

23 RUTLAND STREET, EDINBURGH, 17th May [1870].

MY DEAR MISS SOMERVILLE—Something must be done, for you are an awful misery to me; that is, I am all this to myself, because I don't put down the names of your girls.<sup>1</sup> I can't find a vestige of any of these six young women in my

<sup>1</sup> Dr. Brown was the medical attendant at Miss Somerville's boarding-school.



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books! What is to be done? You know quite well how often I saw them, and 4/ a visit is ample. But in future I promise you on my H O N O U R to put down the names of the maidens every time I see them, for I know I am an awful misery to you.—Yours ever,  
J. BROWN.

### CCVIII. To MRS. BARCLAY

23 RUTLAND STREET, EDINBURGH, *Tuesday [July 1870].*

MY DEAR ELIZABETH—Thanks for your letter and for all your news. . . . I wish there had been open ground and heather, but the children will enjoy everything and you will enjoy them, and George will be for ever poking among the rocks disturbing the tranquillity of his queer friends. The view of Arran will be a perpetual delight; it will be always changing. There is no piece of earth that affects me as Arran does; it is like the deepest, finest music; it is almost painful. The two Johns left yesterday morning at 6. John B. in his new Knickerbockers and his Glengarry, looking fresh and happy. I do hope they will enjoy their time. It is still a misery to think of that quaint puppy's death, and John's pain. . . .

Good-bye, my own dear kind Elizabeth.—Yours and George's and all the children's,  
J. B.

### CCIX. To THE SAME

*Sunday [August 1870].*

MY DEAR UNFORGETTING ELIZABETH—Thanks for yours. We were on deck as we passed you, but we went on the north side of the Big Cumbrae. I slept some, at least if Jack is to be believed in saying I snored. It was much calmer on sea than on land, and I had no uneasiness from without. We found a queer old porter called Gallopper waiting to carry us up to the Porters, at 5 o'clock. We found the hospitablest old lady at the door at 6, and the girls up, the fire blazing, and after getting ourselves washed we had breakfast. Then we called on Professor Andrews and his family, and on Janet Finlay (Russel's daughter), and took Jack to the great Mulholland Flax Mill, and the great Bacon factory, where they can kill and cure 800 pigs a day. I saw 30,000 hams in one house. Then we dined with the old lady and Jack the

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Indian Judge, and then went off in the Express to Dublin. . . . I hope that you and Cottons<sup>1</sup> have got well up, and that you are well, and going to enjoy this philosophic holiday. I am sure George will. Give him and yourself my regards. I shall say nothing more. I should never say anything more. Good-bye.—Yours ever affectionately, J. B.

. . . This is John's first landing in Norway; it feels strange his being so unreachable. I hope and trust they got over well. We have east wind now and had very loud thunder at 4 this morning.

Nelly sends her love and the Captain his best regards. The old General 83, and the Daughters are here. My love to Cottons, and tell her to lay up all sorts of things for the British Association for me.—Yours again, J. B.

### CCX. To LADY AIRLIE

23 RUTLAND STREET, EDINBURGH, 21st October 1870.

MY DEAR LADY AIRLIE—I did not see Lady Blanche or the Sunny-haired and hearted wife. I called immediately before they arrived, and then was absurdly laid up in bed—for it is absurd in a Doctor to succumb to his enemy and friend. I hope Clementine is all right. It will be a great pleasure to see you when you come to see Bryce. I only know how much greater a pleasure it would be were I as I used to be.

I fear Russel the *Scotsman's* wife is very ill. It has been a sad year to him, and he is as tender-hearted as he is strong and droll. It is delightful your reading Miss Edgeworth. *The Absentee* I think perfect, but they are all, down to *Simple Susan* and *The Little Neapolitan Merchants*, quite delightful. That is very interesting about Miss Martineau. What a hardy spirit she has.—Yours and Lord Airlie's and the Lady Scarlatina's<sup>2</sup> ever truly, J. BROWN.

### CCXI. To LADY MINTO

23 RUTLAND STREET, EDINBURGH, 20th December [1870].

DEAR LADY MINTO—I have as yet got nothing worth sending or telling you. Dean Stanley or the other delightful Dean<sup>3</sup> would be most likely to know. I heard to-day

<sup>1</sup> A pet name for Miss Constance Barclay.

<sup>2</sup> An allusion to Lady Clementine Ogilvie's recent illness.

<sup>3</sup> Dean Ramsay, author of *Reminiscences of Scottish Life and Character*.

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from Miss Oswald, her cousin, that Lady Augusta had a bad fall from her horse when in the Pyrenees with Stanley. They are now home.

John Hill Burton has been unsuccessfully garrotted in London, and is full of the power of a walking-stick as a weapon of defence if employed diligently in *thrusting*, he having routed thus his three assailants.—Yours and Lord Minto's ever truly,  
J. BROWN.

### CCXII. To WILLIAM NAIRN

23 RUTLAND STREET, EDINBURGH, 24th Decr. [1870].

MY DEAR AND INCORRIGIBLE FRIEND—What have I done to you, that you heap coals of gold on my head? I shall struggle no longer; I only wish I could be of more good to you, or indeed to anybody. I hope soon to be out and see you. Dr. Peddie is one of the 5 or 6 best of men.—Yours and the Roman Woman's ever affectly.,  
J. B.

Received Ten Pounds and a purse and a long bit of ribbon.

### CCXIII. To MISS JESSIE CRUM

SCURMORE HOUSE, near BALLINA, 7th Aug. [1871].

MY DEAR JESSIE—It was good in you to write that plump pencil note, so full of what is yourself. You have no occasion to conceal your thoughts. I do hope you are still gaining, and that both your chest and its owner are stronger and feeling more of the joy of power and health, but I know you will be good and take care of yourself, especially when your Dr. is away. This is a quiet sweet place, without much feature, except the sea, and that yesterday was lovely and as blue, as crystalline, as at San Remo; but it is a place where a happy man may easily be happier; another man makes out of it the reverse, by the law of his being. You will be rejoicing in this noble address of Wm. Thomson.<sup>1</sup> What a sweep of wing! like an angel's, and such simple, pure, deep, wide, reverent, true science, with its "everlasting law of honour." (What a windy expression!) How Margaret and your father would have rejoiced to have seen and heard him! And if it is God's pleasure, their spirits may have been so

<sup>1</sup> Sir W. Thomson was President of the British Association in 1871.

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favoured. The stereotyped clergy and their people will be down upon him for saying that it is not unlikely our world was peopled from the débris of others, and that we have been "evolved" not merely from apes and monads, but from fern seeds; but God's power and will had not less scope in this view than what is commonly called the creative act. Surely if we go far enough back we find Him inhabiting His own eternity, and dwelling alone, and then saying "Let it be," and it was, and that *it* has in it the potentiality of the whole. If He puts it there and sustains it, for He still lives in all life, and moves in all motion, and if in the case of man there was some special addition of a moral and Divine sense, by which, in a way otherwise than all other living things, man was made in His image, that seems to me a quite scientific, as it certainly to our minds is a satisfactory, hypothesis, in spite of Darwin. But I am getting out of my depth, and you will be good-naturedly smiling.—Yrs. ever affectly.,

J. BROWN.

### CCXIV. TO THE SAME

23 RUTLAND STREET, EDINBURGH, *Sunday* [Oct. 29, 1871].

MY DEAR JESSIE—I have to thank you for your long, kind, loving letter, and for the slippers. . . . They are delightful, I might say, at least my feet would say, *delicious*, cumfy and soft and roomy, and yet softly grasping the foot, with a meaning—the happy foot! If the man above them could only get his brain and his self into such a quiet, warm, contented dwelling-place,—but there even you cannot reach.

I like Gladstone, and I don't. He is a wonderful man, and full of boy, fresh and eager, and such a range of sympathy and interest, such serious, *great* eyes, such a look of earnestness; but—he is the son of his father! There are elements in his nature you would not like; he does not attain to the first three. He is first of the second, he wants the oneness, the simplicity that go to and with the greatest greatness. I could explain this better if I saw you. I am glad you go on Monday. You will carry yourself carefully as if you were somebody else's, because you must get through scatheless to Mentone. It is well, and also not, that you can shoot along the railway now by Monaco, instead of encountering the steepes and keen air and glories of Turbie. What a view that is! I suppose we must give up many of our views now. We both gain and lose. Fancy diving into

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a black hole on this side Mt. Cenis, and emerging at the other, without the intermediate difficulties and beauties and grandeurs! I am as sorry as is in me, for the big man<sup>1</sup> and his loneliness, but then he is big and good, and can contain himself and wait, and lives for others; and then his pipe and his book and his work and his letters and his expectations will cheer and help him. I wish I were "sitting under" him, and could get him to speak the living truth. If I could but will to be whole—wish and will all in one,—in wishing, will, what a puzzle! How much and how little a man can do to be made whole; believe and live! but then of yourself you can do nothing, not even believe. It is like a dreadful circle which has no beginning.

### CCXV. To JOHN RUSKIN

23 RUTLAND STREET, EDINBURGH, 21 November 1871.

MY DEAR JOHN RUSKIN—It was indeed a pleasure to see that hand again. Thanks, and you have given great delight to the worthy Pettigrew. I somehow thought you would like these papers. It is sad about your dear mother—sadder for you than for her. I see her kind words often as I pass into my dining-room, on your portrait by Richmond which she gave to my children, now long ago. Give her my warmest regards, and thank her for being your mother. I have long and often wearied to hear not only of, but from, you. I always follow your course as I best can. I know how good and kind you have been and are to that queer and dear child,—isn't her name Constance Hilliard? I remember well her invitation. I have never been there since, and am not likely ever to be again; its heart is dead—that loving, bright, faithful friend, such as you and I are not likely to see till we see herself, if that is ever to be. My daughter has been married for 5 and more years, to Captain Law, son of General Law, who was at Corunna and still lives, who was at school with all the great Napiers and had fought them all. My son is with me. . . . Helen is very happy, as this world goes. . . . As for her father, the least said is the best. Five years ago past in June, my mind lost its self-control for a short time and was shattered. It went off like a watch that has lost the restraint on the spring and which runs through a day in 10 minutes, and though outwardly quiet and even torpid, it is

<sup>1</sup> The Rev. Charles Watson, D.D., Largs.

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within as if a Rupert drop knew the peril that is within it, with outer film of smooth glass. I am thoroughly and for ever shattered and done for, cannot think to any purpose, cannot write, have no hope, no relish for anything but sleep and forgetfulness. I work every day at my own proper work, probably as much as ever, but within all things have come to an end. I only feel that I cannot feel. I did not mean to say all this; it is wickedness even to put it into words—forgive me, my dear friend. May you be happy and victorious and blessed in blessing others with pure thoughts, with true knowledge, with that Godliness which alone is great gain, and brings its own contentment with it. I have seen the Walls of Fribourg since I saw you, and the Rocks of Shaftoe, and I saw how like they were to yours, and yet how different.

Try and forgive my making you read all this.—Ever yours affectionately,  
J. BROWN.

### CCXVI. To MISS HILLIARD

23 RUTLAND STREET, EDINBURGH, 30th Novr. 1871.

MY DEAR LITTLE FRIEND—It was good and dear of you to write me your own, very old self, for I can see you just as you were <sup>12?</sup> (10?) years ago, only why do you disfigure your tidy face and *skull*, as we Doctors call it, with that frightful erection? Surely Mr. Ruskin does not like that! Sad things have come to us since that tea on the lawn, but you are happy still, and your eyes untamed and your mouth as happy as then. You shall never see any one so good and brave and faithful and droll and all that is best, as Aunt Pauline; I, at least, never will; and you know my best and dearest is gone too. . . . I am better (externally) than I was, but broken and heartless, out all day doctoring people. Did I send you my book? You will be kind, I am sure, to John Ruskin. He is unchangeable. Do you ever hear anything of Alfred Trevelyan? Good-bye, my dear child, may yours be all that is best and cheeriest. Give your mother and father my best regards, and maybe you will write me again some day, and tell me that that dreadful hairy tower is no more. Do you never come to Edinburgh and the Highlands, far grander and sweeter and beautifuller than Venice or Cadore or anywhere?—Your old(er than ever) lover, JEYEE BEE.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> In this phonetic spelling of his initials J. B., Dr. Brown reproduces the pronunciation of J as taught in all the parish schools of Scotland when he was a boy.

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## CCXVII. To LADY MINTO

23 RUTLAND STREET, EDINBURGH, 31 December 1871.

DEAR LADY MINTO—It was and is a great pleasure that kind and *plump* letter. It was good in you to write so much, though I wished like Oliver for more; I know you had more just at your pen's point. I am very glad to get your good account of Lord Minto. I know, or rather I cannot know, how much you have suffered, all to yourself, since May—the present distress and the dread of what might come, for “fear is more pain than is the pain it fears.” I trust he will now get thoroughly well. I hope Lady Dunfermline is getting good at Laverstoke; she was not prospering here. I am sure it was necessary for them to go. The old Lady is sleeping herself away, very gentle and withdrawn; quite a study that strange nature is—the softer the farther in. I would like to see Hugh's letters from Florida; perhaps he will break out again, to our enjoyment, in the *Scotsman*. I think I told you I said to him, “You are now a man of letters.” “Of letter,” was the reply of the other, Hugh's great-grandson. He is a fine, open nature, with a touch of romance and reverie. Fitz is looking very well; he is going to dine here on Tuesday. I am glad to hear of the other two; you are indeed happy in such boys, though I daresay your heart often yearns to that parvula whom God took to Himself. This world is made up of *special* pains, suited with a divine nicety to each one's case, though we can't see the why always, or indeed often. I am comforted by your words on *Middlemarch*. It is the very truth; you have touched it to the quick with your needle, that “very laboriously clever.” I have now almost no recollection of any of the characters, and not the slightest interest in their future. The only thing like genius is the Uncle. He is the ideal of commonplace, and is amusing and new. I don't like her (Miss Evans') style of mind and feeling. There are too many big words and hints of superknowledge, and there is that taint of sensuality, or rather of sexuality, which was so offensive in *The Mill on the Floss*, and which strangely infects even Miss Brontë and Mrs. Gaskell—a sort of coarse George Sandism, without her amazing genius and beauty of word. As for Tennyson's last,<sup>1</sup> I would not read it, and Lady Dunfermline gives it its proper adjective, “*odious*.” Contrast it with the burning simplicity

<sup>1</sup> “The Last Tournament,” *Contemporary Review*, Dec. 1871.

and power and truth of Byron. I am sure you must have rejoiced over that estimate of the two in the last *Quarterly*. I never have forgiven Tennyson for writing *Vivien*. I am afraid I don't like Forster's *Life of Dickens*. I dislike the personal essence of both men, while I admire the unique genius of the one, and the strong though grandiose talent of the other. Dickens was at the core hard and egoistic, intensely. How different from poor soft-hearted, great-natured Thackeray. I read *his* books more than ever. Dickens I cannot re-read, and yet he was infinitely the greater genius in the true sense, in which he is what never was before or will be again. Have you seen Hookham Frere's *Life and Works*? I was delighted both with him and his remains, especially his *Aristophanes*, the *Birds* and the *Acharnians* especially—what thoroughbred wit and English and tone, and that temperance of utterance which is getting so rare. Have you seen Professor Mahaffy's *Prolegomena to Ancient History*? If not, I am sure you would enjoy them. Have you seen the Duke of Somerset's Gospel? It must be able from the notice I have seen in the *Daily News*. He has a strong, clear head. We have now 3 Theological Dukes. We enjoyed Jowett's visit very much, and he was happy in his quiet way. I liked his sermon much, but with my old-fashioned beliefs I miss the doctrine of Sin and of salvation. I thought all he said about Bunyan and Spinoza most beautiful and fresh. He told me a joke of Lord Westbury's about Judge Bovill (the Tichborne judge) which was new to me: "If he had a little more experience, he would make the very worst judge that ever sat upon the Bench." I wish you could be here to hear Stanley on the Church of Scotland; he will blaze out gloriously, I have no doubt. He and she are to be at Mrs. Cuninghame's. I dine with them this day week and will report. John is steady, and reading to good purpose good books. He has his mother's faculty of knowing *very soon* what any thing or one is worth, and not proceeding *very* further if it's not worth the while; *haud multa sed multum scire*, you will remember, and you were well entered and grounded in your girlhood, and you are grateful I am sure to him who was your Master and is still your friend.

I was losing myself in your Quarto the other night, to my great delight.

I saw Fitz the other day riding into Princes Street from the hunt in his quiet coat and leggings, sitting like one of



## Letters of Dr. John Brown [1871

the riders in the Parthenon frieze. Let me end this unconscionable letter with thanking you again for yours.—  
Yours and Lord Minto's ever truly, J. BROWN.

### CCXVIII. To LADY AIRLIE

[Lord Airlie was Lord High Commissioner to the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland this year, and Lady Airlie "held court" at Holyrood Palace.]

23 RUTLAND STREET, EDINBURGH, 27th May, 1 P.M. [1872].

DEAR LADY AIRLIE—You forget nothing, and might be a permanent Queen to-morrow. I was just going to write to you that I cannot come to you to-day, having 65 lives (Insurance) to take between 5 and 6. I shall take my chance of looking in to-morrow before 11. I shall not come to breakfast. I was happier than for long the other night and almost forgot myself. You had such pleasant women about you, though Fate and that handsome Scotch Grey tore Mrs. Lindsay Carnegie from me at dinner. You are beguiling the ministers and disquieting their wives sorely. They will both be the better of this.—Yours and Lord Airlie's ever truly, J. BROWN.

I am very sorry I am engaged on Thursday to Mr. Lancaster, one of Jowett's best boys. . . .

### CCXIX. To MISS JESSIE CRUM

23 RUTLAND STREET, EDINBURGH, *Saty.* [Aug. 26th, 1872].

MY DEAR JESSIE—And you go off on Monday, and will see wonders—Ben Cruachan and Morven and Ben More in Mull, and "Knoidart, Croydart, Moidart, Snizort, and Ardnamurchan," and all the glories of sunsets. And I might have been with you, and seen all this! and smoked a calm pipe or manilla with the men after you, the women, were in bed and in your dreams; but it was not to be. I am here for a man who did more for me than is often the privilege of one man to do for another. You must be well clad—Shamoy waistcoats and warm stockings. You will see, I hope, Coruisk from the sea, and anchor in Loch Scavaig, and feel to the utmost the power of the place. We were there years ago, and I believe it was in a miserable night I tumbled over miles of moorland and she got what in the end

took her away. You must go up the lake and get into its perpetual gloom at the top, and then you will see its perpetual dawn, the innocent brightness of its foot towards the open, sunny sea. How she delighted in its strength and beauty! And you will see the wild, tragic Coolins, as if crying out in anger or pain, as if fixed in some altitude of intensity. There is nothing in Switzerland like them. There may be much that is greater, or rather grander. I wish William to reprint the Green Book<sup>1</sup> without change, except addition,—to put in Bellagio and some others; and you must have some not unfit. I often think of her and her life, and yet how much of the deepest and best delight she got out of it; and she now understands the why, or does not care to understand it, in the far more exceeding, the eternal.

You will perhaps break out into a little letter to me. It will make up to me for my loss, and perhaps you will break out into verse, for you have the real trick of it. My John and John Young are off with their knapsacks, and their pipes, and their youth and their innocence, to walk across Ben Nevis and all manner of mountains. I hope Mary is well and strong, and Walter Tertius in full health and glee.—Yours and his and his origins's ever affectionately,

J. BROWN.

#### CCXX. To Miss C. BARCLAY

23 RUTLAND STREET, EDINBURGH, *Tuesday*.  
[August 27, 1872.]

CONSTANTIA CARA—Thanks for two of yours. I hope to get away by the 10th of Sep. at latest, and therefore beg you will so arrange as to take charge of me, and see that I am not annoyed or cheated. Jane Brown and Alexander are now at Coulnakyle. The 2 Johns, Young and Brown, were expected yesterday. . . . How is you? I like you better than I did, and I always liked you. I hope George has *boiled* over and is well, and thoroughly *heeled* now (horrible!). Yours and theirs and the hills's ever, my dear old Constantia. You know that is the name of the dearest and sweetest of Wines. Now you are a pleasant, and a dear, but not a sweet wine. A sweet wine or woman is not to be desired; a woman who has sweetness in her is. As to the dearness of a woman, that has a double sense; some are dear in both, some only

<sup>1</sup> *Verses*, by Lady Thomson, privately printed.

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in one. My solid, calm, cool opinion is that you are not of the double sense. You are laughing at me and I am at myself, so good-bye, and come and go up and protect me.—  
Yours ever affectionately, J. BROWN.

### CCXXI. TO HIS SISTER MRS. WILSON

[COULNAKYLE, 23rd Sept. 1872.]

MY DEAR JANE—Thanks for yours. It is pitiful, fearful weather here; the whole country was white with snow this morning, up to the door, and the uncut corn lying prostrate under the snow. We had a search yesterday after church for the Big Tree—Peter Porter's Tree. After wading through the heather and cranberry bushes we came to the great fellow, standing stark up like a mast, with a crown like a stone pine, the King of the forest, really a noble, hale old tree. It took Mrs. B. and May and J. B. to encircle it with our joined hands, so that it is more than  $5\frac{1}{2}$  feet in diameter. You must come up some fine day or days, and draw him carefully, lovingly. He stands on the outlook far above the Abernethy forest, which stretches far and wide up to the Cairngorms; to the right were the hills of Badenoch in a delicate blue haze; in the dark wood lay the loch of Garten, gleaming like silver; in front, beyond the forest, a long ridge of dark brown hills; and at its back, dazzling with its spotless snows, was the mighty Cairngorm, as white as "Salmon." The effect of this—the sun was specially on it, and making a sort of tabernacle of light—was really wonderful—quite. Turner or Sir George or M'Whirter or George Reid or you! could make something of that tree in a great Sunset—lying, or standing rather, against the saffron, radiant sky. When under the tree, and looking up through its needly foliage, it was like the finest lace laid upon the sapphire sky.—Yours,  
J. B.

### CCXXII. TO MISS JESSIE CRUM

COULNAKYLE, NETHY BRIDGE, Tuesday [Sept. 24th, 1872].

MY DEAR JESSIE—Thanks very much for your plump and satisfying letter; it was good in you. You must have had more of dis. than of comfort, but you can enjoy even the dis. now it is over. . . .

I was at Loch Kennard Lodge on my way here, and saw

Uncle John (a perfect character, ready made for Addison or Thackeray). . . . Uncle John is perfect; his intensity and simplicity and sharpness, his very hair, his shirt collar and neckcloth, and that ring—every gesture perfect! He has slain 1300 birds, besides many beasts. There is something very genuine and peculiar in that Graham blood, genius, something never before born. . . . John was over seeing them, and he had a famous walk across the top of Ben Nevis and into Laggan. I wish he would marry; but then what would *me* do? This is a noble, free region, the strongest, sweetest, dryest air, I think, in Scotland. The Cairngorms lie before us across the great Abernethy forest. I can trace the road we took 20 years ago to the top, when she had got her fatal mischief in that miserable night walk in Skye. Ah me! my dear Jessie, if I could only get some hope of being with her again, and for ever, but I cannot; I am getting quite dead.

I have been reading slowly, detaining myself over *Philip* (Thackeray's), reading *A Shabby Genteel Story* first; it is wonderful for its truth and its perfection of workmanship. I miss him always the more.

. . . Good-bye, my dear and unfailing Jessie.—Yours,  
J. B.

## CCXXIII. TO MRS. PEDDIE

23 RUTLAND STREET, EDINBURGH, 24th December 1872.

MY DEAR MRS. PEDDIE—Thanks for the great pleasure of reading this;<sup>1</sup> it is indeed the best word I have seen on the book, and the writer of it. I take it to be not only sounder, but in vital insight more quick and true than this intensely clever and unhappy and (I think) much overpraised woman. It is so true, and has never before been written (I have often said it) that unexpected gratuitous *nastiness*, which makes you uncomfortable. Her (George Eliot's) views of life, of God, of all that is deepest and truest in man, are low, miserable, hopeless, and she seems always wishing to drag her readers down to her dead level. Her *genius* has been greatly overrated, and I would not speak of her in the same sentence with Shakespeare. She is an anatomist, and in order to be so she must either get her subjects dead to begin with, or kill them. She has none of the sweet, plastic,

<sup>1</sup> A letter written by a young lady criticising *Middlemarch*, in which she compared the characters in the novel with Shakespeare's characters.

## Letters of Dr. John Brown [1872

living, concrete power of Miss Austen or *Jane Eyre*, or even Mrs. Gaskell. (She has not much of the sweetness, but it is there.) I know nothing of hers (Mrs. Lewes') that amounts to genius proper and true except Mrs. Poyser, and she is born of Dickens. No, Mrs. Lewes is intensely clever, often laboriously so, disagreeably *knowing*, but she is unwholesome, and in a high sense unreal, and I trust that in fifty years she will be forgotten except by critics.

Which of the Langs is this? She must have real insight and power and sincerity of mind. Thanks again and thanks far more for your and my Alexander, who is indeed a helper of men (and women). His goodness and thoroughness are like nobody else's.—Yours affectionately, J. B.

I am, as you see, still horizontal.

I would say that G. Eliot has *enormous* talent, sometimes intensified into almost genius, but that her books are manufactured, not *born*. She sets herself to do them, possesses, is not possessed by their life. But I know I am in a small minority about all this. I like her "Mr. Gilfil's Love Story" in *Clerical Sketches* best of all her writings. Her poetry is not poetry at all,—just as near it as a strong will and prodigious talent can come; it is dead already, or rather never was alive.

### CCXXIV. TO LADY AIRLIE

23 RUTLAND STREET, EDINBURGH, 1st January 1873.

DEAR LADY AIRLIE—A very happy 1873 to you and yours! Thanks for the great pleasure you have given me. The Diplomat is capital, romantic, sentimental, vivid, and his sketches of the King (that cross between a lion and a goat), of "Rosine," indeed, of every one, are clean and to the quick. The Castiglione is in a higher and deeper line, very touching, like a portrait by Da Vinci. I shall not forget her; and what can be cleverer and odder and more piquante than that Mad. de Solms, and that letter of "ma belle mère," and then the real political insight it gives, Cavour, and above all that dreary, dreadful, despicable creature the Empress. I shall send it you in two days, but I wish a friend, Mr. Barclay, to see it. There is an able and eloquent, and in the main just, attack upon Froude's *Ireland* by Lecky in this month's *Macmillan*. . . .—Yours ever truly,

J. BROWN.

1873] Letters of Dr. John Brown

CCXXV. To MISS BARBARA M'LAREN

23 RUTLAND STREET, EDINBURGH, 3rd Jan. 1873.

Dr. John Brown requests Miss Barbara M'Laren<sup>1</sup> to furnish him with 35,000 of the late Provost Lawson in embryo, copies to be delivered at the rate of 10,000 a week. Money no object.

CCXXVI. To MISS GLASS

23 RUTLAND STREET, EDINBURGH, 11 Jany. 1873.

MY DEAR MARGARET—Thanks for your kind and not a bit too big letter. If you take to writing that Novel and give up writing to me, I'll not be pleased, only I would like to see the novel, and I don't flatter a bit; if you were to tell your own story—and give the characters, not merely the incidents—and that of those about you, of old Uncle, of Mother and the queer man, of Garibaldi, and the pony, as you could quite well do and do well, you would write something I would like better than *Middlemarch*, and others would too. What battles royal you and I would have if we got upon George Eliot, Dickens, and Browning! I dislike much more than I like *Middlemarch*; it is steeped in discomfort, discontent, despair, as she herself is, and she is full of nasty, unwomanly knowledge, which she is always hinting at; she is not wholesome. She has great power, wit, and prodigious but laborious cleverness and cuttingness; but she has more intellect than genius, more knowledge of ideas than of realities, or than insight; she is the *Maker*, not the *Mother* of her characters. Dorothy is an impossible being. The only character I like is Mary, and the only diverting one is Mr. Brooke. There now is my defiance! Remember it is only mine. And now for Browning! He has genius, true poetic genius, but he kills it with hard consonantal words, and philosophy and metaphysics, and obscurity and endlessness. Lady Minto wrote me yesterday, "If gathering all the ugliest words out of the Dictionary and mixing them up, is poetry, then is B. a poet." He *was* a poet, and might still be if he would be modest and quiet, and distil the pure sweet liquor slowly. *Fifine* was not nice, and though there were wonderful things in *The Ring and*

<sup>1</sup> See sketch facing page 106. Miss B. B. M'Laren had acquired the art of engraving on wood.

## Letters of Dr. John Brown [1873

*the Book*, why prolong it so? Time is too short, and my patience too. His wife had more of poetry proper in her, with all her wildness and rawness, and in *Aurora Leigh* disagreeableness; her *Cowper's Grave* is perfect, and much else. And then Dickens and his *Life*! Don't be angry at me, but I couldn't finish the 2nd Vol., I was so angry at both men, Dickens and Forster—Dickens so hard and exacting in his egoism, so self-centred, his falsetto pathos, his caricature run mad, and above all his conduct to his wife. . . . So, Margt.; you see what a scrimmage we will have. . . .

Good-bye, I daresay you have had enough. Now what you should do is to send your triple defiance across the Forth; don't spare me or paper.—Yrs. and Aunt's, Kitty's and that unhappy and eight-day-clock-pulse man's ever affectly.,  
J. BROWN.

CCXXVII. TO MISS J. MARIANNE FOX, NOW MRS. WOODS

EDINBURGH, Sunday, 17th March 1873.

DEAR FRIEND—You must think it unkind, my never w thanking you for your last letter, so full of quick and cordial thought and feeling; and so it was and is unkind; but I sometimes feel that when I write as I did in the letter to which yours was an answer, I deepen my own moral disorder and inefficacy, and feel that it is a sort of selfish gratification to be allowed to write to you, in order to get sympathy and attention which I don't deserve, so I am going to keep away from self and all my *bêtises*. How are you? and what doing? and reading? and thinking? Have you seen Dr. McLeod Campbell's *Recollections*? It is full of deep spiritual insight and a strange simplicity and godly sincerity. Get it. His style is often dim, while his thought is clear like a bright light in a horn lantern.

The women here as everywhere are pushing to the front. I am going to vote for Miss Phœbe Blyth for the School Board in spite of, not because, she is a woman. Am I a savage? I agree with St. Paul more than with Miss Jex Blake.

Now be good and write me a long letter, for which I hunger.—Yours ever affectly.,  
J. BROWN.

## CCXXVIII. TO THE MISSES GLASS

23 RUTLAND STREET, EDINBURGH,  
10 P.M. *Wedy.* [24th April 1873].

MY DEAR MARGT. AND KITTY—This is very sad, never again, this side time, to see that dear loving, bright face, so true, so full of all that is best and loveliest. I am very sorry, but it is not all sad; she has joined the great company, her once loved friends, her best Friend. John and I will certainly come. The last of that household, and we may truly say the best. I am very sorry for you both. I'll see to the newspapers to-morrow; it is too late to-night (past 10). Poor Mr. Molteno, he will know what he has lost.—  
Yrs. and his ever affectly., J. BROWN.

## CCXXIX. TO MISS E. T. M'LAREN

23 RUTLAND STREET, EDINBURGH, 1 May [1873].

MY DEAR "ROUNDED INTELLIGENCE"<sup>1</sup>—Thanks much. I don't wish you any more intelligent, only I would like you a little rounder—fatterer, so to speak; it would cotton you all round and act as a buffer from within and from without; so feel less, eat more, especially fats and oils, and above all don't go back to Manchester. He must be awful and delightful Mr. Morrison; "the music of his tongue" must equal "Jeanie Morrison's"; a tremendous instrument of oppression, and yet amusing to us, at your hand, very. . . . My Helen is off and her 2, and I fear we will soon hear of the good old General's death; he is 86. John and I were at the Funeral of his mother's dear old Aunt, Mrs. Molteno—86 also. She lived in a quaint house,<sup>2</sup> with two quaint daughters, much older than herself, and we buried her in Arngask churchyard, a simple old graveyard on a little hill with a glorious around. They kept the coffin open till we came, and I saw the white, sweet, happy, little face which I remember 50 years ago, when we were afraid she was going to marry my father at Biggar! She was clever and thoroughly cultured, and had lived much with clever men. She loved my Kitty quite singularly, and she her; they understood one

<sup>1</sup> Mr. Morrison had said that he looked upon Dr. Brown's correspondent as "simply a rounded Intelligence."

<sup>2</sup> Newton, Glenfarg.



## Letters of Dr. John Brown [1873]

another. . . . I am hoping to get away next week to Brecon with the Barclays and John, but may not, as old Mr. Marshall, 15 Regent Terrace, is very ill. I was up at him this morning at 5, and saw the top of Arthur's Seat studded with the first of May folk. Good-bye, and get strong and get a happy *body*.—Yours ever,  
J. B.

### CCXXX. To MISS JESSIE CRUM

23 RUTLAND STREET, EDINBURGH, *Sunday [May] 1873.*

MY DEAR JESSIE—How are you? and all you best love?

I have just been reading some pages of Dr. Campbell's book<sup>1</sup> which you gave me. I have never finished it! and almost hope I never may. I like a little of it so much; it is like being dipt in heaven, but it is slow and often curiously childish, and yet deep as the sea.

I came back on Saturday week from ten days in England, with Mr. and Mrs. Barclay and John. . . .

1st day to Shrewsbury, a fine old town.

2nd to Brecon by Ludlow and Hereford, through blossoming orchards and mighty elms and oaks in their virgin leaves.

3rd to Wells by Gloucester and Bristol. You must go to Wells, and put up at the Swan, an old-fashioned, most hospitable bird. The west front of the Cathedral is simply glorious; it is (literally) the *Te Deum* in stone: there are the glorious company of the Apostles, the noble army of Martyrs, and all the rest, praising Him, acknowledging Him to be the Lord.

4th to Ilfracombe by Exeter. Don't go to Ilfracombe.

5th to Worcester by Exeter and Bristol.

6th to Dolgelly under the shadow of Cader Idris, glorious.

7th. By Barmouth, Port Madoc, Beddgelert, Llanberis to Carnarvon and Bangor.

8th. Home by Chester.

Yours and all yours affectionately,  
J. BROWN

### CCXXXI. To MISS GLASS

23 RUTLAND STREET, EDINBURGH [22nd May 1873].

MY DEAR MARGT.—I should have written you sooner to know how you and Kitty were, and what arrangements were to be. I have been away for 10 days in England with Mr.

<sup>1</sup> *The Nature of the Atonement*, by Dr. M'Leod Campbell.

and Mrs. Barclay and John, enjoying ourselves much, though I was put about at Wells by John taking Asthma, to which he has been subject since he was quite a boy. How are you? We greatly enjoyed our visit, for it is not wrong to say this, even when we think what took us there, for hers was a happy end of a pure, lovely life; and we were so glad to see the Newton and its region, and to find you both so well set down; and then good Mr. Williamson entertained me all the way to Kinross with the very kind of local information I like. You will miss that dear friend, who was always ready with mind and heart and good cheer. I will be glad to get a line from you. Isabella and John join me in best regards to yourself and Kitty.—Yrs. ever affectly.,

J. BROWN.

#### CCXXXII. To GEORGE BARCLAY

PORTREE, *Sunday*, 1 P.M., 23rd June 1873.

MY DEAR GEORGE—Here we 3 are, having been to the U.P. church and heard the prodigal son enlarged upon, by a strong-voiced, honest fellow. I almost think if we can't get away to Broadford, I'll go and hear him energise in Gaelic. We have had great pleasure, the run from Edinburgh to Strome Ferry glorious. As I passed Coulnakyle the sun was shining all over it, the huge mountains and their snows in gloom. . . . It was beautiful from Dingwall to Strome, the Skye hills standing across the horizon as we ran down the side of Loch Carron, steeped in Amethyst light.

There is a new Landlord at Strome; he had only come, and things were in some disorder, but, except a disreputable, broken-hearted waiter, in full Canonicals (very dirty), the house seems much better managed. We had difficulty in getting beds. I slept on a bed as hard as wood; still I slept. We rowed down next morning to Duncraig, Matheson's, to which the road is not yet made; it is a handsome, sensible house. At 3.30 we left by steamer for Broadford and Portree. Nothing can be nobler than the view as you leave Loch Carron, the huge hills about Torridon and Kintail huddled together, and one or two very distant ones in deep blue. We got to Portree at 7.30, came here, Portree Hotel very good. Next morning off to Uig, passing the place where stood the house of Flora Macdonald and her husband, and where Johnson and Bozzy enjoyed themselves. It is a bleak country, a sort of peopled wilderness,

## Letters of Dr. John Brown [1873]

cottages almost everywhere. The sea views were fine, and we got a sight of the Coolins; it is wonderful the power and tragic charm they have wherever seen. Uig is a pretty snug little bay, with its tidy Inn and its thick-legged, humorous landlord, John Urquhart. . . . We drove the day we arrived to the Quiraing, through a dull country, a good preparative for its terrible beauty; but the rain was so furious and the wind, that we could not go to the Quiraing proper, and came home and dined. Next morning we started again, and the day was better, though not fine. When we got near the terrific rocks and giddy slopes, my head failed me, and William acknowledged that if he had known what it was he too would have "henned." John, of course, was in the van and up to any peril. It must be a most singular and grand sight, and outside as I saw it, is one of the greatest, strongest bits of scenery I have ever seen. It will haunt us all. We then sat down by a little burn, and had our biscuits and cheese, and beer and whisky, and off again round by Duntulm, and home by the coast to Uig, where we had tea and parted from our jocose and sturdy landlord, and drove hither. Last night the rain descended and the floods came—such rain and wind! We were hoping to get off this afternoon to Broadford and start thence for Coruisk, but it looks hopeless. I hope you are all well. I don't think I'll get home till Tuesday night, if then. The brothers are excellent companions and can endure silence, which is a great thing. They will go afterwards to the Torridon and Loch Marce region.—Yours and Elizabeth's and the children's ever affectionately, J. B.

. . . If you go to Uig, and you must see the Quiraing some day, be sure to go and see *Castle Ewen*, about a mile from the Inn, a most singular place, a sort of Quiraing in little. The *Blue Bell* was in Portree harbour when we came, and Mr. Stevenson and Mr. Tennant called on us. They had been at Barra and Benbecula, etc., Tennant hunting out Boulders for Milne Home.

### CCXXXIII. TO HIS DAUGHTER

KINLOCHWE, LOCH MARLE, June 27th [1873].

MY DEAREST NELLY—Do you know that Wm. Brown carried John T. B.<sup>1</sup> and me off to Skye on Wednesday last

<sup>1</sup> John Taylor Brown.

week, franking us? It has been very pleasant, we 3 old boys getting on famously. . . .

*Monday.*—To Sligachan inn at the top of Loch, and the foot of Glen Sligachan, very grand and a good inn, good food. We got 3 ponies and 2 guides to go up the glen and see Coruisk. J. T. B. despised his one, and stumped on sturdily through bogs and rocks. This ride was glorious. The huge, wild, jagged Scuirnagilleann which Principal Forbes was the first to ascend, coming down sheer 3200 feet, and great fellows like him all about. After 9 miles' ride we got to Camasunary, and got into a boat rowed by 2 men and 2 women. It was here Mama and Jas. Gillespie and I were so nearly drowned. We landed and stayed an hour looking on the wonderful Coruisk, the lake black and clear and still, and wild mountains of a deep ashy green shutting it in, the fleecy clouds rolling across their tremendous heads—quite an awful place. Then back through the Glen to the inn.

*Tuesday.*—Enormous rain during the night brought down the river in full flood, raging and white over the rapids. We saw nothing in its way finer than this, and we stayed for hours by the river watching it; so bare and well washed are the hills that this prodigious flood did not even colour the water; it was as clear as crystal. This gave a great beauty to the exhibition, which we propose never to forget. Did you read Nicolson's "Notes on Skye" in the *Scotsman*?

*Wednesday.*—By steamer to Auchnasheen, and then drove to the magnificent loch, to dear old Mrs. Macrae's inn, upon which Mr. Barclay wrote the verses.

*Thursday.*—Drove through Glen Torridon to the loch; a perfect day and sight. Nothing could be lovelier than the view of the sea loch, with 10 if not 12 different layers of intercrossing promontories lying in the purest white light, something like the Killerries in Connemara.

*Friday.*—Here we are waiting for our breakfast, and after that, drive down the loch 12 miles, then dine and drive 9 miles to Auchnasheen, sleep there and start in the morning, they for Grantown for 3 days, I for home. I hope you three are all well. It was sad and strange to see all the places again, where Mama so enjoyed herself, and was so injured by a long horrible walk during the night after our boat wreck. Good-bye, my dear child, think much of her, and of her truth and courage and strong love, and all that she was.—Yrs. and the Capt's. and Katie's affly.,  
J. B.

# Letters of Dr. John Brown [1873

## CCXXXIV. To JOHN RUSKIN

23 RUTLAND STREET, EDINBURGH, 4th July 1873.

MY DEAR FRIEND—Yours is a great pleasure, you can never know what of sweetening and enlightening I owe to you.

Make any use you like of my note—I hardly remember its words; the word “fun” is not appropriate—the ludicrous or fantastic drollery or the phantastic (for he<sup>1</sup> had a sort of phantasy beyond mere fancy) laughable might be substituted, but is it worth it?

You are right in missing out the hard-heartedness, though true; it is lawful, but not (at present) expedient to say so. My reasons for saying he was hard-hearted are—1st, my personal knowledge of him many years ago, and my seeing then his intense, adamantine egoism. 2nd, the revelation of his nature given so frankly, and let us hope unconsciously, in his friend’s huge and most exaggerated Life (Forster is a “heavy swell,” and has always been to me offensive, and he has no sense or faculty of humour, and is, as the boy called him, a “harbitrary cove”). . . . He was a man softest outside, hardest at the core.

I hope to get something for you about “Sour Plums” and “Dinlay.” I send you a little book of my dear old and ever young friend, Miss Stirling Graham, now 93 years old, and fresher in heart than you or I. You will see some things in it about Sir Walter, of whom she was a great friend and pet.

I will send you a copy of C. Turner’s print. You are right, it is that reduced, you know. I’ll give you two, I think not known, anecdotes of Sir Walter when I next write. Thanks again for your dear letter.—Yours ever affectionately,  
J. BROWN.

P.S.—How is Constance Hilliard?

Young Adam Black, son and partner of old Adam, is delighted with you on Scott. It is sure to go to our heads, and you must make it a *separate book* by and by.

<sup>1</sup> Dickens.

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CCXXXV. To SIR JOHN D. COLERIDGE, AFTERWARDS  
LORD COLERIDGE <sup>1</sup>

23 RUTLAND STREET, EDINBURGH, 31st July [1873].

MY DEAR SIR JOHN COLERIDGE—You have yourself to blame for the trouble of reading this note. I cannot but thank you for this noble tribute to Wordsworth in *Macmillan*; it has gone to my heart. It is so thorough, so true, so seasonable. Our friend Principal Shairp will rejoice over it with singing; but I wish you had not said such hard words against Jeffrey, so hard as to be in a measure unjust. You would not have said them had you known him. He was not big, not roomy, but he *was* true, and had genuine poetic sensibility, as witness his relish not only for Shakespeare, but for the other great and terrible dramatists of his time. His sense of the ludicrous interfered with his sense of what was noble and lovely in Wordsworth, whose own want of that sense is one of the queerest defects in his nature, the possession of which would have enabled him to make *Peter Bell* perfect, which even it is not.

Now, forgive me. You will hardly remember seeing me, but I shall not forget seeing you at Lord Advocate Young's.—I am truly and with great regard, yours, J. BROWN.

CCXXXVI. To SHERIFF NICOLSON

23 RUTLAND ST., EDINR., Sunday [Aug. or Sept. 1873].

MY DEAR SHERIFF—Thanks for the Woodcock and the speckled grouse, whose eyes may have beheld Blaven; and thanks still more for your thinking of their destination. I hear you are liking your town, and still more that your region is liking you. Still I remain unappeased, unreconciled. You must find your way to New Abbey, to my Jane and Mrs. Copeland.—Yours and your sister's ever, J. B.

CCXXXVII. To THE SAME

EDINBURGH, Sunday, August [1873].

MY DEAR SHERIFF—I sent you a halfpenny card, which I hope you could not read; it is only reflection that can enable you to do so. Be sure to make Butters <sup>2</sup> give you his wife's

<sup>1</sup> Published in the *Life and Correspondence of Lord Coleridge*.

<sup>2</sup> The landlord of Sligachan Inn.

## Letters of Dr. John Brown [1873

Savoury Omelet, and observe the maidenly manners of his sister, and remember me to all 3. John Campbell is in an awful wax at amounting to "almost genius." Nevertheless it is the right thing; of genius he has too much, and too little. Did you read Shairp's article in the *Quarterly*? in which he ignores Cosmo<sup>1</sup> and confounds the Robertsons.<sup>2</sup>

There is a man here whom you would like in much, "Mark Twain"—Mr. Clemens; and he has a darling little wife, whom you had better not see, as it might disquiet your peace for life, not to speak of hers—such a startlingly pretty little creature, with eyes like a Peregrine's, and better than she looks. They were out seeing Russel and Abbotsford yesterday.

I hope you will break forth again after being at the Coolins; and be sure to see Urquhart of Uig, and write up the wee Quiraing and Castle Ewen.—Yrs. ever,

J. BROWN.

### CCXXXVIII. To MISS GLASS

I am in my  
64th year to-day.

23 RUTLAND STREET, EDINBURGH  
[22nd Sept. 1873].

MY DEAR MARGT.—I have just come from my holidays. Thanks for your kind and welcome letter. I think I must read to Principal Shairp what you say about your infantile passion and your joy at finding Uncle John agreeing with you. Wordsworth was a revelation to me. I read the *Excursion* when I was 18, and was a different man from that time; he added a precious seeing to the eye and to the mind.

Will you and Kitty not venture from your cosy home? I fear not.—Yrs. and hers affectly.,

J. BROWN.

### CCXXXIX. To HIS SISTER MRS. WILSON

23 RUTLAND STREET, EDINBURGH, Oct. 12th [1873].

MY DEAR JANE—Dr. Candlish is dying, without pain, blessing all about him, quite gentle and happy. It is very impressive, this fierce, little, troublous, shifty, assertive man, lying there as simple as a child. I have always felt that at

<sup>1</sup> Cosmo Innes.

<sup>2</sup> E. W. Robertson, author of *Scotland under her Early Kings*, and Joseph Robertson, editor of the *Statuta Ecclesie Scotticane*.

1873] Letters of Dr. John Brown

his centre he was good and true-hearted, and living very close to God, always getting more kindly, more desirous to agree and be happy, more aware of how small the big things are, and how great the small. There is a great deal of St. Paul about Candlish. How are you and James and the children? Ruskin has scourged Tyndall in the most delightful manner. You will see it in Tuesday's *Scotsman*; it should have been in a week ago.—Yrs. and all's ever, J. B.

CCXL. To JOHN RUSKIN

23 RUTLAND STREET, EDINBURGH, November 4 [1873].

MY DEAR FRIEND—I have read every word of this in my carriage, dodging about from door to door, from one "case" to another. Besides being new and true and important—very—this is full of "go," "throughout with the full fire of temper in it." That dying child! that miserrimus Miser! and all that about anatomy profoundly true. That is one of the few Art principles you did not need to tell me, I saw it in the skinned Laocoon 40 years ago. That about Herbert's "Moses" most true and deserved. I don't wonder that Pugin hated him. I was disgusted with that picture—utterly unsacred, unfelt, untrue. But I must not give you any more to read—600 students!

*Macte esto!* my dear, dear friend.—Ever affectionately,  
J. B.

CCXLI. To THE SAME<sup>1</sup>

23 RUTLAND STREET, EDINBURGH, 27th December 1873.

MY DEAR OLD FRIEND—I wish I could give you such pleasure as your little kind note of this morning gave me, and that some of the happiness you give to others would return fourfold into your own bosom. I had a happy letter from Conie telling me of you. Why is that fine creature not married? I see in the *Scotsman* of to-day your letter on Ernest George's etchings. I have seen several men who had read it and felt its power. This should cheer you a bit, your circle is always widening. I remember a time when you were a voice of one crying in the wilderness. I am glad and pleased with myself to find your views exactly mine. I was looking through that delightful book of George's and saying,

<sup>1</sup> See Ruskin's Letter, No. XV.



## Letters of Dr. John Brown [1873

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<sup>1</sup> Cosmo Innes.

<sup>2</sup> E. W. Robertson, author of *Scotland under her Early Kings*, and Joseph Robertson, editor of the *Statuta Ecclesie Scotticane*.

## 1873] Letters of Dr. John Brown

**his** centre he was good and true-hearted, and living very close to God, always getting more kindly, more desirous to agree and be happy, more aware of how small the big things are, and how great the small. There is a great deal of St. Paul about Candlish. How are you and James and the children? Ruskin has scourged Tyndall in the most delightful manner. You will see it in Tuesday's *Scotsman*; it should have been in a week ago.—Yrs. and all's ever, J. B.

### CCXL. To JOHN RUSKIN

23 RUTLAND STREET, EDINBURGH, November 4 [1873].

MY DEAR FRIEND—I have read every word of this in my carriage, dodging about from door to door, from one “case” to another. Besides being new and true and important—very—this is full of “go,” “throughout with the full fire of temper in it.” That dying child! that miserrimous Miser! and all that about anatomy profoundly true. That is one of the few Art principles you did not need to tell me, I saw it in the skinned Laocoon 40 years ago. That about Herbert's “Moses” most true and deserved. I don't wonder that Pugin hated him. I was disgusted with that picture—utterly unsacred, unfelt, untrue. But I must not give you any more to read—600 students!

*Macte esto!* my dear, dear friend.—Ever affectionately,  
J. B.

### CCXLI. To THE SAME<sup>1</sup>

23 RUTLAND STREET, EDINBURGH, 27th December 1873.

MY DEAR OLD FRIEND—I wish I could give you such pleasure as your little kind note of this morning gave me, and that some of the happiness you give to others would return fourfold into your own bosom. I had a happy letter from Conie telling me of you. Why is that fine creature not married? I see in the *Scotsman* of to-day your letter on Ernest George's etchings. I have seen several men who had read it and felt its power. This should cheer you a bit, your circle is always widening. I remember a time when you were a voice of one crying in the wilderness. I am glad and pleased with myself to find your views exactly mine. I was looking through that delightful book of George's and saying,

<sup>1</sup> See Ruskin's Letter, No. XV.

## Letters of Dr. John Brown [1873]

"Now this is the true thing—clean, strong, honest, modest." I always feel insulted by these smudgings and besmearings. I wonder you don't etch more, after the delight of doing such things as Turner's "Dragon," the "Moat of Fribourg," etc., but you would need to be ten men to do all we wish you to do. We have one of your old disciples here, Mrs. Geikie. She and I like to take you to pieces. It will be ten years, in a few days, since my darling was taken to heaven. Blessed are the dead who die as she did; indeed, Blessed are all the dead in much, for surely there is an eternal purpose of mercy and probation and recovered righteousness and ultimate Salvation. You never wrote truer or keener words than these you sent me on Feby. 5th, 1860: "That firm and keen mind, so free from all visionary and weak and wayward modes of thought."<sup>1</sup> I have often blessed you for them. I send you a notice of Sir Henry Raeburn.<sup>2</sup> It is a thing of shreds and patches and the product of a shattered brain, so be merciful to it. I hope you are sleeping well and much. What of Fred the Great? Tait was choked off by the cowardly Editor of the *Contemporary*, but will appear untouched soon along with George Forbes's reprint and translation of Rendu.

You never sent an arrow more home or to better purpose. Good-bye, my own dear friend, and may the Almighty, your father's and mother's God, bless and cheer you.—Yours ever,  
J. BROWN.

### CCXLII. TO MISS SUSAN BEEVER<sup>3</sup>

23 RUTLAND STREET, EDINBURGH, April 2 [1874].

MY DEAR, KIND FRIEND—I cannot let a post pass without thanking you for your delightful letter. . . . How you have made me see that long room in which my gifted friend sits and writes and thinks and mourns. I wish he were happier, but he is happier in reality than many who are more likely to be called so. It is now 30 years since he first wrote me, and I have known no nobler, purer nature since. I am sure your cheery *unsubjective* nature must do him good. Have you lived all your days in the Lake Country? I walked from

<sup>1</sup> Written of Mrs. Brown.

<sup>2</sup> See *Horæ Subsecivæ*, 3rd Series, p. 415.

<sup>3</sup> Ruskin's neighbour at Coniston, to whom he addressed the letters from Italy contained in *Hortus Inclusus*. In one of these, dated 25th August 1874, he says, "I have not been able to write to you, or any one lately, whom I don't want to tease, except Dr. Brown, whom I write to for counsel."

1874] Letters of Dr. John Brown

Edinburgh to Windermere and back in 1833,<sup>1</sup> taking about a month to it, and I have once since made a visit to Miss Wilson at Fox Ghyll, and yesterday I had a call from Mr. Ridehalgh of Fell Foot. Do you know him? I envy you your delights with the birds and that clever squirrel, and all the children of Nature that the country gives. I was much in the country when young, and delight in natural history of all sorts. Have you any of my books? I hope not, as it will be a great pleasure to send them to you. What a beautiful *Bee* that is! Whose workmanship is it?

Do you know I read Dora Wordsworth's *Journal* of her visit to Scotland in 1803 with her great brother and Coleridge lately, and it is going to be published soon. I shall send you a copy. And now let me again thank you for your great kindness, and believe me with great regard, yours ever truly,  
J. BROWN.

CCXLIII. To THE SAME

23 RUTLAND STREET, EDINBURGH [10th April 1874].

MY DEAR, KIND FRIEND—The flowers came and are now blooming afresh and pouring out their fragrant breath; they delighted my sister and my niece, who treated them with warm water. We shall, I assure you, appreciate the eggs. I am a great eggman, eating 365 (at least) in the year. I have got a great sorrow since I wrote, in the death of my very dear friend, Lady Dunfermline, widow of the grandson of Sir Ralph Abercromby, and a sister of the Earl of Minto and of Lady John Russell, a most excellent, sweet, and wise-hearted woman. She died this morning at Rome of rapid inflammation of the lungs, leaving one girl. I hope you get good news of our Genius. Remember me to him.—Yours ever affectionately,  
J. BROWN.

This is no answer to your two delightful letters.

CCXLIV. To MISS GLASS

23 RUTLAND STREET, EDINBURGH, 19th April [1874].

MY DEAR MARGT.—Thanks very much for yours. The "White Doe" by Shairp is delightful; he knows and feels its

<sup>1</sup> On the return journey he walked 90 miles in two days.

## Letters of Dr. John Brown [1874

power and true charm. He has a true "study of imagination," whence come the things unseen. You will be delighted with Dora Wordsworth's *Journal* in 1803 in Scotland, with Wordsworth—"William," as she calls the mighty being—and Coleridge. It is simply delicious, and has the thymy breath and free air of the braes and hills, the very breath of Nature, and that steady, deep sense that Nature is the Art of God. I will send you a copy; Shairp and I are editing it.—Yrs. and Kitty's ever affectly.,  
J. BROWN.

you are right in the main about Wordsworth. They have the dew of their youth these earlier ones, a bloom of their own, but the older ones have a depth and sad sweetness, also their own, with much prosaic stuff!

### CCXLV. TO MISS E. T. M'LAREN, MISS BROWN, AND HIS SISTER MRS. WILSON<sup>1</sup>

23 RUTLAND STREET, EDINBURGH, *Sunday* [April 1874].

MY DEARS, CECY, ISABELLA, AND JEAN—How are you? That is a good couplet (Cecy) and I mean to crib it. We get on fairly (Isabella); there was a terrific cleaning paroxysm, but we have escaped. Bella distinguished herself, though her face could not be so, for its glorious dirt and persp.

We are having 5 men to dinner to-day! It couldn't be helped<sup>2</sup> and Helen and the Cook are quite gracious: President Eliot of Harvard University, Tait, Arthur Mitchell, J. T. B., and Alexander. The foods are simplicity itself—Soup of the tail of Ox, fried fish, Catherine's speciality, leg of Mutting, and Mac of roni. I hope you will not come home merely to meet Helen, *there is no need of that*. We had a famous dinner last night, at Professor Lorimer's. President Eliot, a delightful man, Blackie, Calderwood, Sir Alexr. Grant, Sellar, Dr. Muir, Dr. Aitken, Hodgson, Stodart, ME, Wilson, and Mr. and Mrs. L., and Dr. Pauli, an old Marburg Student and about to be LL.D.'d, and a great admirer of "Crum Brown."

Our plan (Jean) is to make a pilgrimage to Loch Trool, and James must bend his mind to that intent. I pray for a

<sup>1</sup> Addressed to the Manse of New Abbey.

<sup>2</sup> "To-day" was a Sunday.

1874] Letters of Dr. John Brown

horse as strong as the venerable Criffel<sup>1</sup> and as fast as he is slow, and as sure as fate.

Good-bye all 3 of you.—Yours ever, J. B.

The Duke of Buccleuch is to be made LL.D. on Wednesday.

CCXLVI. To MISS SUSAN BEEVER

23 RUTLAND STREET, EDINBURGH, 3rd May 1874.

MY DEAR FRIEND AND SUSIE—I hope you are rested and fairly well. There is a feeling of elevation and unselfishness, after the escape of a dear friend from the miseries and ruins of this life, that may be said to be a kind of pleasure. Eternity with its satisfying peace seems nearer us, because *she* is in it. Are you writing to John Ruskin? if you are, put this note<sup>2</sup> in your letter. I do hope he is getting good and a little happiness. You remember his description of Carpaccio's Sleeping Princess, with the little angel. I have got two friends to bring me a photograph of it, and it justifies every one of his words. I hope soon to send you Dora's *Journal*. . . . —Yours ever affectionately, J. BROWN.

CCXLVII. To JOHN RUSKIN

23 RUTLAND STREET, EDINBURGH, 3rd May 1874.

MY DEAR FRIEND—I often find myself wondering where *he* is, and still more how he is, and if his body is any happier. Since you left, I have come to know your "Susie." She writes to me and we are friends, though unseen; there is something very loving and truthful about her, surely, and she prattles away like a girl, and yet with the sad knowledge of years. She gave me a quite exquisite description of your room. Her shattered sister is gone where there is no more shattering. Two friends have just come back from Italy. I told them to be sure to see Carpaccio's Sleeping Princess and the Wee Angel in Venice. They have brought me a photograph. You have not said one word too much; it is wonderful for purity and quiet intensity, they quite appreciated it. I have got the May and June *Fortes* (?). It is a fruit I always long for. We are getting Dora Wordsworth's Tour in Scotland in 1803, with "William" and

<sup>1</sup> Dr. Wilson's horse.

<sup>2</sup> The letter to Ruskin, which follows.

## Letters of Dr. John Brown [1874

Coleridge, printed entire, with an introduction by Principal Shairp. It is delightful: you know some of it already in his poems.

Send me a line when you write to "Susie," and God Bless my friend!—Ever affectionately,  
J. B.

### CCXLVIII. To THE SAME<sup>1</sup>

23 RUTLAND STREET, EDINBURGH, 20th May 1874 [Sunday].

MY DEAR FRIEND—It is good in you to write. We will know by and by what you have been doing and thinking and feeling in the Sistine Chapel. . . . I have had great pleasure from our Susie's letters, old and yet young—the young lamb's heart in 60 (?) years, playful, fresh, blithe, and less selfish than your real lamb is. Mrs. Barclay brought me "St. Ursula," and would delight you with her perfect appreciation of the picture. She and her husband—you must know them some day—she has a quite singular instinct for excellence in painting. She passed Raphael (except when young) by and took to Fra Angelico. She has given me a photograph of Christ with the bandage on and the black man spitting on Him and the hands; it is wonderful, and is a religion. It made me long to see the real things. I was in Galloway with my John for 5 days last week; the air as clear and as cold as ice, the trees awfully brilliant and differentiated (a horrid word). The wood Hyacinths covering acres of brushwood like *snow* dust of sapphires, quite wonderful; at one place, Ravenshall, between Gatehouse and Cree-town, we stopped the carriage and stared. The very horses, I think, wondered. Then we went from Newton Stewart to Loch Trool, a real little Highland loch, savage and sweet, granite and heather, and oak and birch, and Merrick quite near it, 3000 feet high. George Forbes's Volume is out with your addition and Tait's iron flail. It is a terrible polishing off of Tyndall. Your words from *Fors* are, I think, unique in literature. Don't over-cerebrate. I think I told you we are publishing Dora Wordsworth's *Journal* in 1803 entire. It is delightful, and will set you on fire and awriting. I have got Susie's photo—a young old face, loveable, sensitive, and true.—Yours ever affectionately,  
J. BROWN.

<sup>1</sup> See Ruskin's Letter, No. XVI.

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## CCXLIX. TO MISS SUSAN BEEVER

23 RUTLAND STREET, EDINBURGH, 21 May 1874.

MY DEAR FRIEND AND SUSIE—Thanks for yours. You have the rare gift of talking on paper; please to talk as often as you like. I have a pleasant little note from John Ruskin from Rome. He is working as if he were paid for it, and better too, his 4 or 5 hours a day in the Sistine Chapel. The Carpaccio picture of St. Ursula asleep is described in one of the *Fors Clavigeras*; I can't say which one, as mine are away being bound. I'll tell you when they come home. My son John (my only son) and I were for 5 days in Gallo-way visiting my sister, who is the parish minister's wife of New or Sweetheart's Abbey; and we saw Skiddaw and Helvellyn towering among the clouds. I thought you and your "Old Man" would lie midway between the two.

It was very cold and clear, but the foliage and flowers exquisite, the whins glorious, and the wood hyacinths covering acres of brushwood, like snow of sapphires, or like the sky looking up from the ground.

I hope you are getting rest, but the hunger at your heart will increase rather; at first we dare not be selfish; afterwards the hunger comes on and will never cease.—Yours ever affectionately,  
J. BROWN.

## CCL. TO HIS COUSIN, JOHN BROWN JOHNSTON, D.D.

23 RUTLAND STREET, EDINBURGH [25th May 1874].

MY DEAR JOHN—That excellent Uncle<sup>1</sup> is gone—is with God; he sank rapidly from last night. Yesterday morning I feared the worst from his look—death's pale ensign—and he seemed to think so, for he said to me, with his old look and humour, "That speech of mine is like to be my testimony in the Grassmarket."<sup>2</sup> He said little, but was quite happy, though in pain and great weakness. Yesterday he said, when asked if he was happy in his mind, "*Quite*, for I know in whom I have believed," and he said the same thing this forenoon. It has been sudden, and yet when I think of his age, I cannot wonder. Our *best* man is gone—the cleverest, truest intellect—and he has not left a purer heart behind. I have

<sup>1</sup> Rev. Dr. William Johnston of Limekilns.

<sup>2</sup> He made a speech at the Synod of the United Presbyterian Church a few days before his death.



## Letters of Dr. John Brown [1874]

said something for the *Scotsman*, which I hope they may put in, and which I hope will not displease you all. I am very sorry for you, for he was like a spiritual father to you and Robert.—Ever affectionately,  
J. B.

I took Peter Davidson<sup>1</sup> in after afternoon sermon, but he was gone—looking nobly sweet, and with a look of mental concentration and power, as Peter remarked, quite remarkable—gone to God in the fulness of his intellectual strength.

### CCLI. To MRS. SELLAR

23 RUTLAND STREET, EDINBURGH, 18th June [1874].

MY DEAR "MRS. ELEANOR"—Thanks for your letter; it was good in you. I was afraid you might see the verses,<sup>2</sup> being ashamed of them as if I had had an illegitimate baby! "Essential" is not a good word, but the meaning is just what you give it, true, permanent beauty, not depending upon age or skin or feature even. I didn't like such a word as surpassing; perhaps "of the purest beauty" might do. The whole thing is a sort of escapade, but it was borne in upon me, as the saying is. I saw Granny to-day, very well, rejoicing in a photo from a picture of Robert's children. What a picture she looked with her letters and her eager personal talk (not about herself, of course); she is wonderfully full of quick interest in her friends and in all that interests them, a most motherly mother. It is good to hear of the Pro.'s work; he is doing capitally, first-rately in the Chair. I am constantly hearing this. The Barclays are rejoicing in Moulinearn old Inn—roomy, clean, homely, with a huge and handsome Drawing-room, eggs and milk and cream in abundance, quite retired and yet near Pitlochry, where gaiety reigns, and the wonderful sunsets up by Killiecrankie, and an old Baptist church in the wood close by, presided over by a Tailor, mighty in the Scriptures.

I have not seen the Grants; I heard of his joke yesterday; quite victorious, he that runs may read, he that reads should run. You will be delighted with Dora Wordsworth's *Journal* of her tour in Scotland in 1803, with "William" and Coleridge. Shairp has written a noble preface. John Maitland has fever in London, not in danger as yet. . . .

Good-bye, and love to all.—Yours ever affly.,

J. BROWN.

<sup>1</sup> Rev. Peter Davidson, D.D., Dr. Brown's minister.

<sup>2</sup> In the *Spectator*.

## CCLII. TO HIS SISTER MRS. WILSON

[June 25th, 1874.]

DEAR JANE—Pleasant it is to be told that “Cockburn and me” are like, very. Cockburn has, *is* a genius; therefore “me” has and possibly *is* a genius! genius being the power of saying or thinking or feeling or depicting (an old Abbey tree, for instance) anything newly and truly. You are aware that some things may be new and not true, and some things true and not new. It is the NEXUS, as James the learned Pleaer will explicate to you. John Ker was here, delightful, a benign pure happy intelligence—a sort of domestic Sun.—Yrs. and James’ ever, J. B.

The review! was, to speak professionally, somewhat *c-o-n-s-t-i-p-a-t-e-d* and *c-u-r-t*.

CCLIII. TO SIR HENRY TAYLOR<sup>1</sup>

23 RUTLAND STREET, EDINBURGH, July 27th, 1874.

DEAR SIR HENRY TAYLOR—Let me thank you for two great pleasures—for your letter and for your proof.<sup>2</sup> I agree with you as to “Dora’s Journal,”<sup>3</sup> but I like those lapses into level commonplace; they are like the pauses of moorland in an intense highland landscape, and I never weary of her prattle. It is selling well, and there will be a second edition immediately. It is more than I expected. Our modern eaters of books like concentration and spiciness; even Tennyson is more of a liqueur than of a wine, still less has he any of the leisureliness of Chaucer’s nut-brown ale, with which you may smoke a pipe and ruminate. I am delighted with the proof more than I care to say. But why must you die before we get it? It will almost make us desire your death. I don’t know when anything has pleased, has satisfied me so much. I have just read your lines on Edward Villiers—I read them long ago; they are now alive, and impersonated; and your lines to your wife. All that about Wordsworth and Coleridge is most delightfully true.

<sup>1</sup> Published in *Correspondence of Sir Henry Taylor*, edited by Edward Dowden. See *infra*, Sir Henry Taylor’s Letter of July 31st, 1874.

<sup>2</sup> A part of Sir Henry Taylor’s *Journal*.

<sup>3</sup> Dorothy Wordsworth’s *Recollections of a tour made in Scotland*, 1803.

## Letters of Dr. John Brown [1874

Wordsworth is lost in himself, and he too often drivels and talks numerous prose, and to a frightful extent; still he is the great imaginatively formative and expressive mind of this century. How I used to rejoice in *The Statesman*, and to read to my wife *The Statesman's Wife*. She is gone, and was, I am sure, one of the women you would have loved and understood, and *vice versâ*. I was at Minto last week; Lord Minto is greatly better; your "Nina"<sup>1</sup> very well and brilliant and good as ever; she always speaks of you as the father of her mind. They had a great misery the day after I left in the death, by drowning in the Teviot, of a young gardener.

I hope to meet your daughters there by and by. Why shouldn't their father and mother come with them? Seriously, about the Autobiography, if it is all like this, why shouldn't it come out now? I put this quite seriously.

Miss Fenwick—I wish I knew more of her. She is Sara Coleridge's friend, and where are *her* letters? What a wonder of insight, understanding, knowledge, imagination, and critical *vis* and womanly sweetness, that Sara must have been! She justifies her father's existence, if it needed it. Must I return this proof? and am I to see no more of it till I or you die? That of Sydney Smith is delicious.

With much regard and much gratefulness, yours ever truly,  
J. BROWN.

I let my cousin—my second self—see the proof. He was delighted. He has and knows all your books. I send you his *Bibliomania*, which I am sure you and your friend De Vere will relish. That reading of Dante's "Great Refusal" is his own.

I am thankful you took Southey's advice and your own, and kept the preface intact, even if for nothing else than "persons impassioned, passions personified."

### CCLIV. TO JOHN RUSKIN

23 RUTLAND STREET, EDINBURGH, 27th July 1874.

. . . Last night I gave myself up to your 4th Volume of *Modern Painters* and detained myself over these marvellous plates:

The Two Passes of Faïdo.

The Towers of Fribourg.

The Laws of Evanescence—to me always delightful.

<sup>1</sup> Lady Minto.

# 1874] Letters of Dr. John Brown

The Aiguille Blaitière.  
The Carrara Quarry, etc. etc.

There is an article in the *Saturday Review* of the 25th in which the writer shows his relish of your illustration of the cartful of herrings. I met Dr. Acland of Oxford the other day. He is taking his wife and children to the Highlands, and after that, himself in a yacht to St. Kilda. He brought painfully into my mind our dear Pauline<sup>1</sup>—where is there any one like her? I often wish you had recorded her.—  
Yours ever affectionately, J. BROWN.

## CCLV. To THE SAME<sup>2</sup>

WEENS, NEAR HAWICK, 3rd Aug. [1874]—(*ex cubiculo*).

MY VERY DEAR FRIEND—Your letter finds me here, and in bed with a painful affection of the absorbents of the leg, with general illness and sleeplessness. No, my dear friend, my not coming to you in no sense whatever depended, or was in any sense connected with my sister<sup>3</sup> not coming, be assured of this, it was simply my feeling of inability for being even with you. She will be much pleased with your mention of her, but will fully confirm her wayward brother. I am in the midst of August *Fors.* How beautiful it is! and the character of Mr. Henry Telford! and his introducing you to Turner through that glorious Rogers Volume. I must end, as I am still queer and giddy. I am here within 4 miles of “Charlie’s Hope.”

Good-bye, and God for ever bless you and all you love and who love you.—Ever affectionately, J. B.

[*Note on Letter by J. R.*—“Keep this for me. I trust he may write often yet, but he may not.”]

## CCLVI. To MISS SUSAN BEEVER

23 RUTLAND STREET, EDINBURGH, 5th August [1874].

MY DEAR, KIND FRIEND—I have been much engaged with death since I last wrote. My old friend Lady Dunfermline, whom I have seen twice every week at least for 27 years, has died, and I have had much to do and think. Thanks for

<sup>1</sup> Lady Trevelyan.

<sup>2</sup> See Ruskin’s Letter, No. XX.

<sup>3</sup> Miss Isabella Brown.

## Letters of Dr. John Brown [1874]

yours and your delicious account of your birds and squirrels ; you will need all their help to keep your heart from weeping for the vanished hand, but, my dear friend, be thankful you can feel. I see people who can't feel anything but their own selfish wants. Is our Genius at the Village du Simplon now ? and is it in Italy or Switzerland ? These bits from him are like apples of gold in pictures of silver, great and foodful thoughts in noble, beautiful words. I wish we could cheer him a bit, but he has Heaven before him to let grow his wings and satisfy his longing soul.—Yours ever affectionately,  
J. BROWN.

### CCLVII. To GEORGE BARCLAY

EDINBURGH, 23 RUTLAND STREET [August 6th, 1874].

MY DEAR GEORGE—Thanks for your letter, which I would call “graphic” if the authorities would permit. You *present* the place and people to me. I do trust you are laying in health capital. I go up to-morrow till Monday to Moulinearn, to my great joy. You would see my old Lady<sup>1</sup> and friend is at last gone over to the majority, and I feel it very much—a great steady interest taken out of my life. I ~~really~~ liked the curious old nature. The last thing she did give me a glorious bouquet of Roses which she had been holding for me for some hours ; roses, and 96, and death ! She is to be buried to-day. I was at good Cosmo Innes's funeral yesterday, quite a small gathering of real, immediate friends. J. T. B. and Alexander are off to Cape Wrath and the Smoo Cave. I hope to get away on the 25th with Isabella and Mrs. Moore to Skye and Loch Maree for 4 or 5 days, and then come and rest with you. The city is swarming with Americans, and I have been considerably interviewed. They are kindly in their way, and amazingly wide-awake. I saw a sweet young widow of a nephew of Lowell, who (the Nephew) was killed in the war, a very sweet, modest, and blooming (rare among them) woman. John is in good spirits. Good-bye. J. B.

### CCLVIII. To MISS EDITH TAIT

EDINBURGH, 23 RUTLAND STREET, Monday [August 10, 1874].

EDITH!—It was awful after you left. They shut both windows and that inf— that incarnate baby began afresh to

<sup>1</sup> Dowager Lady Dunfermline.

# 1874] Letters of Dr. John Brown

yell; its mother tried the natural bottle in vain; it spurned it. The father, who was deep in the *Scotsman*, was called "a brute" by both women and told to whussle to the bairn; this he did manfully, but the Inf— yelled more and more, until according to a law your father does *not* know, the yells so accumulated in the apartment that they blew off the top of the carriage, into an adjoining turnip field, covering a fine covey of partridges. It was not so bad after that as the Inf— yelled out into the Infinite, and the return has not yet come. It, the Inf—, came to an end, having cried itself inside out at Sinclairtown, and was succeeded by another Inf—, a yaumerer, not a yeller; it is hard to say which is the worser. I rather think the latter. How are you? and how is everybody?—Yours and everybody's, especially Thalaba's Wife's and Thalaba's self's,

J. B.

## CCLIX. To Miss E. T. M'LAREN

23 RUTLAND STREET, EDINBURGH, 11 August [1874].

MY DEAR CECY—How is you? The Poem<sup>1</sup> is a success, and will be kept in memory. Wasn't it queer and pleasant to see it in real print? May I promulgate its origin from the housetops? Dora would have enjoyed it in a modest, demure sort of way. I had a delightful Sunday at Moulin-earn. 1st, a strong, old-fashioned Baptist sermon in a little church in the wood, the text "What is that to thee? *Follow thou Me*,"—only the man roared and vociferated. It was like the sharp, shattering discharge of a Calvinistic Mitrailleuse in your face. Then, 2nd, a copious dinner with curds and cream and oatcake. 3rd, a hunt after mushrooms and a getting of 9, after crossing the wild Tummel in a boat rowed by Edith Tait. 4th, a seat for hours on the side of the river, looking up and down the strath, glorious in dappled sunshine, listening to the cool happy noise of the river and reading an occasional Psalm of David, and having one's own thoughts. The only thing against the preacher besides his vociferation was his calling himself "This Worm."

And now it is your duty to me to write cheerfully, brilliantly, soundly, and Karakteristikally to yours affly.,

J. B.

<sup>1</sup> "Lines written after reading Dorothy Wordsworth's *Journal*," *Spectator*, Aug. 8, 1874.

## Letters of Dr. John Brown [1874]

### CCLX. To HIS SON

23 RUTLAND STREET, EDINBURGH *Wedy.* [Aug. 1874].

MY DEAR JOHN—Thanks for yours ; you have had a good time as yet. I hope Cairngorm was clear ; it is 23 years since your mother and I were there. If you would like a day's fishing and can get a rod, I am sure Sir George M. Grant and Miss M. Grant would give you leave. . . . I agree as to Glencoe, it is overpraised ; I prefer Glencroe. I have got a queer dog for anybody ; ask Charlie, if you see him, if he would like a cross between a pure Dandie bitch and an otter hound. It is 4 years old, and a solemn and strong-jawed personage.

Bob and the cat play famously ; it enlivens his slow nature. I hope you have been or are going to Belleville. I hope you saw the green loch on your way to Cairngorm.—Yrs. and John's ever, J. B.

### CCLXI. To JOHN RUSKIN

23 RUTLAND STREET, EDINBURGH [16th Aug. 1874].

Is there any engraving of the marriage of the Virgin by Fra Angelico ? I heard this day week in a little Baptist Chapel in a wood up the hill from Pitlochry a most excellent sermon on "What is that to thee ? *Follow thou Me.*" I am more and more convinced that the essence of Christianity and of righteousness and of all goodness is in this, in following the Christ, in thinking, feeling, and acting (within our human limits) as He would have done.

Dora has got to the second edition, and Lady Minto agrees with you as to the birch and the Daffodils.—Yours ever affectionately, J. BROWN.

### CCLXII. To MISS E. T. M'LAREN

23 RUTLAND STREET, EDINBURGH, *August 20th* [1874].

MY DEAR CECY—Thanks for yours. . . . Our Skye exploit has collapsed, and it is well it has. I hope to get away to the other 'Lizabeth<sup>1</sup> and her small women, and peace and the murmur of the Tummel, on the 26th. I am going to try and write something about Mr. Syme when there, and try

<sup>1</sup> Mrs. Barclay.

## 1874] Letters of Dr. John Brown

also to spur on my sluggish self to make up a Volume of odds and ends. Alexr. is at Belfast. . . . You will see Tyndall<sup>1</sup> is rampant on there being no need of a God; not that he says this, but he implies it. If matter is eternal and can by its own forces evolve Sir Isaac Newton from an ascidian, which is a drop of clear jelly, and if conscience is to be found in its egg in this same drop of jelly, then by the law of parsimony, what is the use of a God? How He must look in pity at them when so disporting themselves, and denying Him with the very speech which He has given them! The Law of parsimony, let me tell you, Miss Elizabeth, is that Law of Nature and of God which wastes nothing, never puts forth more power or expenditure than is necessary. See that you observe this in your own soul. Good-bye and good be wi<sup>th</sup> ye.—Ever affly.,  
J. B.

### CCLXIII. To MISS CONSTANCE BARCLAY

23 RUTLAND STREET, EDINBURGH, *Sunday* [August 1874].

CONSTANCE!—What are you thinking of? What are thy deepest intuitions? What are you feeling? What desiring? What regretting? What resolving? What expecting? What fearing? What hoping? How are you sleeping? and eating? and walking? is your wheezling gone? does your bosom's lord sit lightly on his throne? is existence a mystery? thought inexplicable? Time and Space unutterable? what are you reading? and to whom writing? Are you teaching yourself and the children? Are you faint yet pursuing? Answer all these ?'s. . . . You might write to an old gentleman you wot of. John and Bob (human) and Jack and Bob (canine) walked across the Braid Hills, and discussed religion, golf, and girls, exhaustively. Jack is low about girls; Bob is indifferent. John hopeful, but rigorous and shy.—Yours ever,  
J. B.

### CCLXIV. To SIR GEORGE HARVEY

MOULINEARN, *3rd Sept.* [1874].

MY DEAR FRIEND—I was sorry not to see you before leaving. I hope you got some additions to your life Capital at Muckerach. I am here, playing myself. Yesterday, rainy as it was, we went up to Blair, to the Athole Gathering.

<sup>1</sup> In his British Association Address at Belfast.



## Letters of Dr. John Brown [1874]

I saw Millais and Pettie and Cameron and M<sup>c</sup>Whirter, and on coming home met Erskine Nicol, riding; I had been up seeing him some days before; I saw his "Boy with a Sore Belly and Grannie Comforting,"—very good, but too elaborate and overlaid with paint; it is a sort of *relievo*. He is a fine, honest, unspoiled fellow, and was speaking with great delight and affection of you and of your visit. John and Bob (the dog) and I came here to-morrow was a week. John, poor fellow, has had to go home on account of Asthma. Bob remains and mourns him, but consoles himself with the children and with swimming in the river,<sup>1</sup> which is in flood and comes down raging like a lion, shaking its tawny mane. It is a noble region, but it is saddened to me, every bit of it associated with her who is with God. I felt that very much yesterday, at the games where she and I were 20 years ago. Ben-y-Gloe and Schiehallion were the same, but how many friends passed away into the sunless land—sunless to their bodies, not to their souls. I have been reading a book I am sure you would like, *Catholic Thoughts on the Bible and Theology*; <sup>2</sup> get it. He believes in the true *Fatherhood* of God, and that He will ultimately restore all His human children to holiness, happiness, and virtue, when the Son will deliver over the Kingdom ransomed by His blood to the Father, and again all things will be pronounced very good, the best of good. Good-bye, my dear, dear friend.—Yours and your two comforts' ever affly., J. B.

### CCLXV. To MISS C. BARCLAY

MOULINEARN, Friday, 4 Sept. [1874].

MY DEAR CONSTANTIA — Why have I not written you sooner? Why have you not written me?! Why are you not here? When are you coming? The weather has been more bad than good, but to me altogether enjoyable, and the river was glorious on Tuesday. Mama and I and the other children went on Wednesday to the Athole Games, raining terrifically, but the mother disdained it, and we had an hour and a half sunshine for the games. We saw the Duke with his eagle's feather, the Duchess in purple and lace, petite and overdressed, her sister, Lady Dudley, the beauty of London, pretty, but not beautiful, perfectly

<sup>1</sup> See Dr. Brown's verses on "The Tummel at Moulinearn." *Horæ Subsecivæ*, 3rd Series, p. 388.

<sup>2</sup> By the Rev. Frederick Myers.

## 1874] Letters of Dr. John Brown

dressed, her gown fitting her like her skin; perhaps it was her skin. . . . Come up as soon as you can. Mama is, I think, much better, Papa very stiff, the children glorious, and submitting beautifully to knowledge and Miss Janet Brown. Good-bye, and come before I go. Fairy Land was an island in the flood on Tuesday.

What are you doing? thinking? feeling?—Yours affectionately,  
J. B.

### CCLXVI. To MISS E. T. M'LAREN

MOULINEARN, 8th Sept. [1874].

MY DEAR CECY—Thanks for yours. If I had known your habitat, I would have written sooner. I have enjoyed this place and got good, weather notwithstanding. Besides the beauty and nobleness of the region, it is very dear to me, it is so filled with her, and I feel as if, if I could take courage, and go up to Tummel, I would see her, sweet and broken, saying, "I don't like that egotistical bird"—the Cuckoo, which went on all day. . . . We went to the Athole Games, very rainy; you would see that I got the prize for tossing the Caber, magnificent! and for the best made and most graciously worn KILT. Principal<sup>1</sup> carried off the Pipes and Dr. Irvine had the best cheese and Gregory's mixture. Duncan M'Laren, M.P., got the medal for "Celtic Inveteracy," by acclaim. He and his wife and girl and boy are here. I am not going home till Monday, so you might write me. Thank Jeems the doorkeeper<sup>2</sup> (of the Abbey) for his letter. . . .—Yours ever affectionately,  
J. BROWN.

We had such a capital Sermon from our Baptist on the Hillside.

### CCLXVII. To ANDREW MACGEORGE, LL.D.<sup>3</sup>

MOULINEARN, NEAR PITLOCHRY, 9 September 1874.

MY DEAR GENIUS—Do you know, an awful thing happened. The glorious absurdities you sent me from Bilston I took with me to a dinner-party to enliven it as they did me; I left them in the Cab! and the next fare had too much taste and too little principle to return them. I have searched for him

<sup>1</sup> Shairp.

<sup>2</sup> The Rev. Dr. J. Stewart Wilson.

<sup>3</sup> A well-known Glasgow lawyer and brilliant caricaturist.

## Letters of Dr. John Brown [1874

and them in vain ; if you knew the intense pleasure I have in these things, you would get another “ Queen ” and do for her, and I’ll beware of cabs *in futurum*. I am playing myself here in this glorious region, on the banks of the Tummel. I rise at 8 with the murmur of the big and little streams in my ear. (I hear a young cock at 4 A.M. *practising*, horrible but short ; he gets exhausted soon.) I breakfast greatly—an egg warm from the hen, a sprat, oatcake made by a Highland woman. I go down to the river in my slippers and muse ; I get my *Scotsman* at 9 ; I write letters ; I and G. Barclay get into a Basket and are carried by an Icelandic pony, somewhere, and so on ; the children comb my hair (such as remains) ; they go to bed, and Barclay and I go down to the dining-room to a pipe of Latakia.

I have a letter from Sir George, in good cheer.

Art is strong hereabouts—Millais, Pettie, Erskine Nicol, Cameron, and M’Whirter.

Thanks again for the Tyndall ; ridicule is one of the best ways of meeting his pernicious and idiotic stuff.—Yours and theirs ever,  
J. B.

### CCLXVIII. To MISS SUSAN BEEVER

23 RUTLAND STREET, EDINBURGH, 19th Sept. [1874].

MY DEAR MISS SUSIE—I have just come on the following words : “ The Miss Beevers, they are the best of neighbours and most faithful of friends to all, rich or poor, old or young.” This is from Mrs. Fletcher’s *Autobiography*, just printed, but not (I am sorry to say) published<sup>1</sup> by Lady Richardson. It is delightful, and brings back that majestic noble face and mind. You must (if you have not already got it) get it. How are you ? I have been away playing myself and neglecting everybody. Do you see Mrs. Hilliard ? Her sister Lady Trevelyan was one of my dearest friends, incomparable in some ways. I see our Genius is still in Florence. Let me have a few lines from you. How are your eyes ?—Ever affly.,  
J. B.

I wish I could come with him and the birds to your window some day.

I’ll do my best about the seaweeds.

<sup>1</sup> Afterwards published.

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CCLXIX. To LADY AIRLIE

23 RUTLAND STREET, EDINBURGH, 23d September 1874.

DEAR LADY AIRLIE— . . . They are going to marry for the only reason any one should have for such a strange thing as marriage (especially to a woman), and for a reason that is not too common, because they love one another. I know Mr. Mitford's<sup>1</sup> writings and always admired their fun and freshness. If I mistake not, I was the person who gave *Blackwood* the first things he wrote. I cannot remember how it came about. Were they Hungarian Sketches? and was he ever on the Austrian Embassy? Give him my congratulations and tell him he has got a jewel. But I am sorry for you losing (in a sense) that good, sweet, most *original* child, a perpetual rest and happiness to your heart. If I can (that horrid Doctorial "if"! ) I will come up, if it was only for a few hours, to see you and my dear child, and the new House and you all. I was at the Palace<sup>2</sup> this year, but it was a body without the soul. I am to meet Jowett on Friday. I should be at Inveraray, but am kept by work. I wish Cortachy were next door.—Yours and Lord Airlie's ever truly,  
J. BROWN.

CCLXX. To ADAM W. BLACK

23 RUTLAND STREET, EDINBURGH,  
Sunday. [26th Jany. 1875.]

MY DEAR SIR—Would you give your mother my most sincere sympathy—for, though we should all rejoice at our venerated friend<sup>3</sup> being freed from suffering, yet she will not get over this, till she rejoin him—her faithful companion? We were and are all proud of him, the very incarnation of sense and worth, courage, fidelity and homely honour. No such man now survives—he was the last of that race of original Reformers, who—as Cockburn said—were "concentrated by being crushed."

He and my father and Home Drummond were born in the same year and sat on the same bench in Dalzell's Greek Class.

<sup>1</sup> Now Baron Redesdale, author of *Tales of Old Japan*.

<sup>2</sup> Holyrood Palace, at the time of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland.

<sup>3</sup> Adam Black, M.P. for Edinburgh, in succession to Macaulay.

## Letters of Dr. John Brown [1875

My best regards and sympathy to all who mourn the right-hearted old man.—Yrs. ever truly, J. BROWN.

I don't know anything finer than the relation between your father and Macaulay—each deserving of the other.

### CCLXXI. TO THE REV. DR. J. STEWART WILSON

[Enclosing a subscription to the new Parish Church at New Abbey.]

23 RUTLAND STREET, EDINBURGH, *Friday* [April 9th, 1875].

MY DEAR JAMES—This is for the Church of the Future. If I had done as I ought, it would have been ten times as much, at least. Of course I look forward to the whole concern, Church, Manse, etc., passing calmly into the hands of the Eu Pees in 1899. If the U.P.s had a division among them, as is not unlikely, what would they become? *Split Peas!*

I wonder I can write such nonsense, and so may you. Love to Jane. I would like to have seen wee Mary's face during the Caird-Burchard solemnity.<sup>1</sup>—Yrs. ever affectly., J. BROWN.

### CCLXXII. TO LADY AIRLIE

WEENS, 17th August 1875.

DEAR AND GOOD LADY AIRLIE—For you *are* good, ever to write to me, after last year. Your most kind letter found me here to-day. I came here a fortnight ago, out of sorts and tired of men, to escape the great meeting of Doctors, and I was taken ill with a sort of severe erysipelas, which has hardly quite left me. I would, I am sure you know, come to you most gladly, especially if alone, but I am shut up at Edinburgh from next week, if I can go home, to the end of September. It is a great temptation Mr. Lowc, whom I admire and esteem politically and intellectually more and more for his clear, strong thought, his courage and honesty, but I am not *up* to him at present. It is delightful and strange about dear, dear Clementine. One of the things that is always happening, but which when brought close to the heart never ceases to be wonderful, full of all that is in human nature of joy and sorrow and trial and

<sup>1</sup> The marriage of "wee Mary's" governess.

# 1875] Letters of Dr. John Brown

delightfulness. To think of her as I first knew her and now! Remember me by anticipation to Mr. Mitford, and give a mother's kiss to Clementine for me. I hope all your brood are well and happy, and yourself well. I saw Miss Graham three weeks ago, wonderfully well and cheery, happy to stay and ready to go, the present world full of interest, the future "sure." She is less and is deafer, but in her intellect and affections and happy humour and fun, quite herself.

Thank you again, dear Lady Airlie; you have taken a thorn of my own putting in, out.—Yours and Lord Airlie's ever truly,  
J. BROWN.

I am not above 9 miles from Minto, but have not been able to get so far yet. Lady Minto is looking brilliantly well, better than ever I knew her, and full of spirit.

## CCLXXIII. To Miss J. MARIANNE FOX, NOW MRS. WOODS

23 RUTLAND STREET, EDINBURGH, *Jan. 2, 1876.*

MY DEAR AND LONG-SUFFERING FRIEND—What can I say for myself? Nothing. Thanks for your two letters and for this quite exquisite drawing, "the innocent brightness," the peace and loveliness. I am sure John Ruskin would rejoice in it. I am not going to write a long letter, even if I could, for I know that much of it would be of that specious sort which is one of my deepest sins. . . .

I go on in a very dull wrong way, avoiding every one and especially my best friends. I sleep ill, and have my dark times, and I feel my strength going and my relish for thought and feeling, and my selfishness gains upon me. But I know how wrong it is to express this. I long for sympathy, even though it is utterly misplaced. I have not read anything for long; my appetite is gone, and everything overshadowed by the abiding gloom, and yet I know that if I would but be true and humble, I might have peace—a safe peace. Good-bye, my dear, good friend. I think of you oftener than I write to you.—Yrs. ever affectly., J. BROWN.

## Letters of Dr. John Brown [1876

CCLXXIV. To MATTHEW MONTGOMERIE BELL, W.S.

23 RUTLAND STREET, EDINBURGH, *Friday* [1876].

MY DEAR PHILIPPUS—I fear all my idiot votes are bespoken. Why does not Ardnamurchan put in 500 idiots himself? As to the Glasgow windows I detest them; as reek to the een, as vinegar to the teeth, so are these garish, tawdry, hot, detestable pictures as it were on Calico, with their idiotic canopies and the pretty, neat, little idiotic drawings. There is no depth, no coolness, no melody, none of the meaning of detained colour and light, no comfort to the eye. I wish I had shown you when I had them, Ruskin's letters about them.

I have not seen the Parliament House Window, but always fear I would have a *plus* of pain. Thanks, I am much better and you may call on me at any time; it will rejoice me. I'll show you some wonderful pictures of wild-flowers.—Yrs. ever,

J. BROWN.

CCLXXV. To HIS SISTER MRS. WILSON

*5th April 1876.*

MY OWN DEAR JANE—I often think of you and James and the children and the place, and wonder if ever I shall see them all again. I have been reading Browning largely and carefully. He is a very true and great poet, more of both than Tennyson is, by a great way. There is a wonderful *quantity* of thought and feeling in him, and he is always himself, never aping any one; but still he is at times coarse and rough and difficult, and goes off into mere thinking—very hard and strong, but not poetry. I have read *David Copperfield* with admiration (wonder) and disgust. I got an old Sunday book, Bishop Beveridge's *Private Thoughts*, very good, and I read over for the first time these 40 years the *Pilgrim's Progress*—MOST WONDERFUL. I have read Macaulay's *Memoir and Letters*, and somehow he does not rise in one's estimation. The new and the best thing in the book is the manifestation of his intense domestic tenderness and affection. He seems never to have been in love, and there is not a symptom of religion, personal conviction of Sin and Salvation, God and Eternity in the book, though

# 1876] Letters of Dr. John Brown

he may, as I know is in others, have all these, and *therefore* not speak about them; but it feels a want in the book his entirely refraining from any expression of his relation to spiritual things. I have also read Miss Herschel, *very curious*—such an intense, vivid, invincible little Hanoverian; her devotion to her brother is quite wonderful and affecting. And now I must away to bed.

Thanks again for your dear letter.—Yrs. and James's and all the children's affectly., J. B.

## CCLXXVI. TO THE SAME

Thursday [April 1876].

MY DEAREST JANE—I got yours; it is always pleasant; I think I hear you speaking it. You would have a busy and exciting, and I hope victorious, day on Tuesday.<sup>1</sup> James has done it all by his sense and management. Has Balliol College subscribed? it certainly should. Did you put it before the soft-voiced, white-haired Benjamin?<sup>2</sup> Have you heard anything from or of Dean Stanley? I have cut myself off from all and everything that truly interests me—men, women, and things, and what I am to kill time with now, I know not.

I am reading Bogle and Manning upon Tibet; your mother would have rejoiced in Bogle—his sense, his homeliness, his shrewdness and queer humour, his Scotchness. He was a grand-uncle, I think, of Miss Brown of Lanfine, who has published the book; you would like it. Manning is the very queer friend of Charles Lamb who went to China, and to whom so many of the best of Lamb's letters are addressed. Are you coming (you two) to the Assembly? I have read carefully the 3 Vols. of Crabb Robinson's *Diary*, etc., and the 2 of Ticknor,<sup>3</sup> both good, but the last quite excellent, just a little too perfect for human comfort.

I send you for Maggy<sup>4</sup> a bit of the box that was taken this day week from Queen Mary's Garden in the Island of Inchmahome (the isle of rest) in the Lake of Menteith. Lady Clark, Sir James's daughter-in-law, sent it; she says

<sup>1</sup> The opening of the new Parish Church at New Abbey.

<sup>2</sup> Jowett, Master of Balliol. New Abbey, or Sweetheart Abbey, was founded by John Balliol, Baron of Barnard Castle, and Devorgilla, his wife, heiress of the Lords of Galloway. They also founded Balliol College, Oxford.

<sup>3</sup> Ticknor's *Life and Letters*.

<sup>4</sup> Mrs. Wilson's daughter.



## Letters of Dr. John Brown [1876

she found the ground all golden with daffodils, double, or, as she calls them, "tame." The box trees which form the sides of the little Queen's walks are far thicker than my leg.—My love to the children and their Authors ever, J. B.

### CCLXXVII. To JOHN TAYLOR BROWN

22d June 1876.

MY DEAREST JOHN—Thanks for yours, and for that keen, manly, thorough letter. . . . I am here idling away my days and trying to sleep away my nights. I have just finished *Guy Mannering*, and actually *grat* when the Dominie recognises Harry Bertram, and at the majestic death of Meg. It is a wonderful performance for Nature, humour, and true feeling. *Pleydell* perfect and Jock Jabos and Dirk, and above all, the worthy, beetle-headed Dandie. You should read it again, slowly and tastingly. Did you read the extracts from poor Lord Amberley's Book<sup>1</sup> in the *Scotsman*? and did you see the review in the *Times*, which is said to be by Stanley, contemptuous in the main. I would like to know what you think of the poor lad's survey of the of the race. What a capital, thorough, living ie's is.<sup>2</sup> Have you seen a new Life of John Locke? . . . were at Hermitage, Alexr., Jane, and Constance; we saw "Dawston burn" but "Jock O" we did not see. Is Smith allowed to publish "The Bible"<sup>3</sup> separately? I wish you had seen Jamieson and his books and pictures when you were in Aberdeen, and it would have refreshed him. I'll be in on Monday.—Yrs. ever affectly., J. BROWN.

### CCLXXVIII. To HIS SON

SCURMORE, 17th August [1876].

MY DEAR JOHN—I was very sorry to hear that John Young had to leave you. You will now, I hope, be in Glen Lyon and resting yourself and supplying the household with Salmon. I got here yesterday week, after much woe and absurd difficulty. I got to Enniskillen at 12 on Wednesday night, to Sligo next night, and then on here. I sailed up or rather down Loch Erne from Enniskillen, a large and

<sup>1</sup> *An Analysis of Religious Belief*, 1876.

<sup>2</sup> *Celtic History of Scotland*, 1876-80.

<sup>3</sup> Professor W. Robertson Smith. The reference is to his famous article "Bible," published in the *Encyclopædia Britannica* in 1875, and greatly discussed in the Church Courts in 1876 and subsequently.

# 1876] Letters of Dr. John Brown

"handsome" loch, I suppose more than 30 miles long. All my 3 Hotels were "Imperial." I found Nelly waiting for me with her nice phaeton, and Kent, who, to speak confidentially (don't tell Mr. Cunningham), is not a bit improved in legs or in mind. They like him and he is quiet and semi-idiotic and much admired. Yesterday we went across the moors to a wild gap in the hills, well called "the Windy." We dined at the side of a bleak loch called *Talc* from the quantities of mica found near it. We boiled our own potatoes, and they all enjoyed themselves. I hope you have enjoyed your walk and that your feet did. My love to the children. They will be very happy with you.

## CCLXXIX. To MISS GLASS

23 RUTLAND STREET, EDINBURGH, 25th Novr. 1876.

MY DEAR MARGT.—It *is* good in you to write, and make me for a while forget myself and think of better and happier things. Yes, you are right about *Deronda*; as far as I could read it, it felt unwholesome, unhuman, and absurd, full of laborious cleverness and naughtiness. It is deeply true what you say of youth and genius going the wrong way, and losing all that is good in them. That girl is intolerably tiresome when she is by way of making herself be good. . . . Good Mrs. Pattison *is* good, but I prefer your way; she would tire me with excess of word knowledge and that intense interest about everything. I like a little pause now and then, a flash of silence and rest. You would read Macaulay with great relish. I hope you and Kitty are fairly well. I often think of you and your snug house, and that churchyard on the rock with its far outlook.

Write me now and then when you like; it lightens me up a bit. I am now like a stranded vessel, *that knows it has stranded itself*, and sees the stately ships, busy and hearty and useful, sweep past. You will be always thinking and often speaking of the two that you so long cared for and loved, so different and yet so true and sure of salvation, he so gentle and softened at the close. Good-bye, my dear Margt. and Kitty.—Ever affectly., J. B.

# Letters of Dr. John Brown [1876]

## CCLXXX. To SIR GEORGE REID

23 RUTLAND STREET, EDINBURGH [Nov. 1876].

MY DEAR GEORGE REID—It is good, *very*, in you to give me this quite glorious etching.<sup>1</sup> I have seen nothing so to the quick for long. What a nose! buttressed like Ben Cruachan, and what nostrils! what an apparatus for smell! what frontal sinuses! what power of observation! and the broad high skull and the fearless unkempt hair, the wonderful look of a lifetime of loving and keen faculty, of shrewd simplicity and worth. It will astonish Murray and the world, and if Smiles does his work half as well, you will all be immortal. It is from your portrait, of course, and if so, why is your name not at it? Nothing now interests me but sleep and forgetfulness, but I confess to a longing to see this book. I was sorry I missed your call. You *must* see the rns,—quite wonderful for honest, living, delightful manly and womanly, all of them, and all in their best. “The Macnab” simply the perfection of the and chieftain and ruffian, and snuffer, and ebriosus. But there is a want; I don’t know what to call it, but it is what Sir Joshua and Gainsborough have—an ethereal something. I suppose we should call it the ideal. He, Sir Henry, gives the idea, the thing seen, of the man; he hardly reaches to the ideal—the unseen and imagined, and yet true. But you will judge for yourself. It (the Exhibition) has delighted every one. You kindly ask if I am “well and prospering”? I dare not say I am either, but the things I would say as to this are better unsaid. I hope your mother and all yours are well, and yourself in good fettle, sleeping and eating “like anything.” Remember me much to the best of Jamiesons<sup>2</sup> and one of the best of men, to Macdonald<sup>3</sup> and that unforgettable friend and wife, to White<sup>4</sup> the quietly magnificent and beneficent, and his wifely wife, to Geddes<sup>5</sup> and his wife and daughter.

The Barclays are home and will be glad to see you. Could you etch if you tried? Why not? You would get at the

<sup>1</sup> An etching by Rajon from Sir George Reid’s portrait of Thomas Edward, the Banff naturalist. Edward’s *Life*, by Samuel Smiles, with illustrations by Sir George, was published in November 1876.

<sup>2</sup> Dr. Jamieson, of Aberdeen.

<sup>3</sup> Mr. Macdonald, of Kepplestone.

<sup>4</sup> John Forbes White, LL.D.

<sup>5</sup> Principal Sir William Geddes.

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very life of the man, first-hand, and not require to be "rendered."

John sends his best regards.—Ever, my dear Genius and friend, yours affectly., J. BROWN.

Thanks again for this grand old Cobbler. What wouldn't one give to have Carlyle's rugged grandeur and sorrow and anger-worn visage so done! My best regards to Smith.<sup>1</sup>

### No. II

Wednesday.

I am an inobservant ass. I have only now seen the "R" all right; but it must be somewhere in full, in the book, and the eyes like a sagacious old grey terrier of the U.P. persuasion, as commanding and immediate as the open tubes of a double-barrelled gun on full cock. It is a noble portrait, and he must be a true child of nature. I would have liked a little more light on the left of his head and on his beard.

### CCLXXXI. To Miss EMMA JOHNSTON

23 RUTLAND STREET, EDINBURGH, 21 Decr. 1876.

E M M A !—You may tell Ripley, Esqr., and yourself, that the experiment has succeeded admirably. N I M is dead—he is quite calm—he swallowed that paper<sup>2</sup>—I gave it him as a *bonne bouche*, as the delicious *trail*. He made a queer face and subsided—for ever. The funeral is on Friday—next year. Helen confessed—after it was all over. She and the Cook are in custody. The body is to be opened—to slow music—by Professors Lister and Oakeley—and the money extracted, to cover expences. I spelt it with a c, which is obsolete. We expect Ripley to the funeral. We all—including the late N I M—enjoyed the bird; we will carefully treasure up this in our souls.—Yours severely, J. B.

Was it to make the wretched joke of Kitchen Fee—that I lost my Nim?

<sup>1</sup> Professor Robertson Smith.

<sup>2</sup> A fee which had been declined was given to "Helen," with instructions to the cook to serve it with "the bird." "Nim" (Nimmo) is Dr. Brown's nephew.

# Letters of Dr. John Brown [1877]

## CCLXXXII. TO SIR GEORGE REID

23 RUTLAND STREET, EDINBURGH, *Wednesday* [early in 1877].

MY DEAR GENIUS—Thanks for yours and for the dark day that was its procuring cause. You must upon no account do that about “Montrose”;<sup>1</sup> it would *seriously vex me*, and I know you would not do that, though you have much to forgive in me. I have just read Smith’s “Bible” with entire admiration, and (though my heresy nose is not very fine) I can detect nothing unsoond, and it seems to me the very pith of sense. Give him my best regards, and tell him to go on his way rejoicing. It is as tight a bit of work, both in thought and word, as these days have seen. I wish Aberdeen were as near as Muttonhole<sup>2</sup> (4 miles). Have you seen Jamieson lately? I am sure he will be glorying in Edward and in the cuts. How could it be chloroform Edward gave the Fougart? It was in 1841, and that was before Chloroform.—Yours ever,  
J. B.

## CCLXXXIII. TO THE SAME

23 RUTLAND STREET, EDINBURGH, *26th March* [1877].

MY DEAR GEORGE REID—This most original and beautiful frame has just come, and I’ll get the Wonder put in it. I wish I could thank you for this and for all your goodnesses, but I can’t. You don’t know the misery of not being able to be grateful—to feel that you cannot feel. I have at last seen the Exhibition. “Edward’s” (yours) stands its own, and more; it is more human, more kindly than and quite as keen as Rajon’s rendering. The “October” is perfect—the very spirit of the time of year; and the old lady and Smiles. Go on, my dear young friend; God has greatly gifted you, and you are pure of heart and eager for knowledge. May you be strong in health, and careful of your body, and you have a great future. Remember me to your mother, and tell her to pray for humility.

My best regards to Robertson Smith; his portrait<sup>3</sup> is very fine, and though done lovingly is like—gives the best of him.

<sup>1</sup> Drawing by Sir George Reid, reproduced in Smiles’s *Life of a Scotch Naturalist*. See next letter.

<sup>2</sup> A village near Edinburgh, now known as Davidson’s Mains.

<sup>3</sup> By Sir George Reid; now the property of the Master and Fellows of Christ’s College, Cambridge.

## 1877] Letters of Dr. John Brown

Was the frame your own device? the deep square bevel is glorious. Thanks for the Edward newspapers. The whole thing was excellent, and his speech perfect, and his glower over the "flowering shrub" at "the loons"! It (the speech) was much better than if it had been better, and his determination to have his wife "in" the washing tub that Monday morning! Have you a photograph of her? *I am ashamed, and indeed pained, at having this precious "Montrose";* it should never have left Mr. White's.

But this is a poor, strange way of thanking you and him.  
—Ever truly yours, J. B.

### CCLXXXIV. To MRS. SEVERN

23 RUTLAND STREET, EDINBURGH, 1st Oct. [circa 1877].

MY DEAR, KIND, AND LONG-SUFFERING FRIEND—I wish I was one-tenth as good and cheery and thankful and diligent in thinking and in feeling as you are. Thanks for the pears and the eggs, and most of all for the beautiful letter, which seems to flow as spontaneously as the song of a bird or as "lintseed out of a poke"—it is out of the full heart. My heart is empty and dry as Summer dust, not caring for any one or for anything, but sleep and forgetfulness. My Isabella is in much like you, occupied with others, unwearied in good works. My John and his Cousin are playing upstairs a duet of Clementi's. They are both good boys and great friends in their quiet ways. I read most of *Deucalion* in Proof; it is masterly and thorough, and quick with intensity and power.

The morning walks are delightful, I might say delicious, like fruit. What an Artesian well he is, or rather one of nature's great springs, he seems to me never to ebb. Give him my best love, though I was churlish, at least in appearance, to him and his great offer; may God bless and comfort him and you, and all yours and his.—Ever affectionately,

J. BROWN.

P.S.—Susie is Miss Beaver.

### CCLXXXV. To JOHN RUSKIN<sup>1</sup>

HOLYLEE, WALKERBURN, N.B., 25th October 1877.

MY DEAR FRIEND—It did and does give pleasure, and it was good and *teneri cordis* in you to send me the Scotty lot, but, oh! when will we get the rest! You should be twenty

<sup>1</sup> See Ruskin's Letter, No. XXII.

## Letters of Dr. John Brown [1877

several men. I am sure you are right about *The Heart of Midlothian*; it is the most innerly, Shaksperian, and spiritual of them all; that scene in prison with the sisters, nothing goes beyond it. I hope Mrs. Severn is doing well. What a happiness to you to have her and her you! Remember me to her, and to the good genia Susie. I have within ten days read *The Monastery*, *The Abbot*, and *Waverley*, and am now deep in *Peveril of the Peak*, and am lost in wonder and love. By the way, I saw that the great Fiddlemaker's name is wrong spelt; it is Stradivarius, isn't it?—Yours ever affectionately,  
J. BROWN.

### CCLXXXVI. To SIR GEORGE REID

23 RUTLAND STREET, EDINBURGH, 24th Novr. 1877.

MY DEAR GENIUS—That is very beautiful, full of feeling and imaginative truth, the dreary morning breaking behind the procession. But why do it? Why waste more brains and feeling on me than you have already done? If you do it at all, you will follow not Mr. Bouverie Primrose's advice, who thinks models useless if you have a good memory!—worthy and dense man!—and you will indicate Rab solemnly presiding at the back of the cart as a very chief mourner; and the whole thing should be, as indeed it is, shadowy and ghostly, and I would make Jess<sup>1</sup> walking a little faster. But why, as I said already, do it at all?—Ever affectionately,  
J. B.

### CCLXXXVII. To SIR JOHN SKELTON

23 RUTLAND STREET, EDINBURGH, Wednesday [19th Decr. 1877].

MY DEAR SHIRLEY—It is good in you to think of telling me. I needed it, for I have been in a state of mental torpor all these years. . . . My book appetite is all but gone, though I think I could still tackle to Shirley's words; why is he never writing? I hope you are feeling greatly better. My love to Mater pulchra, and to her sisters when she writes, though I little deserve to be allowed to send it.

Our great old friend at Morton<sup>2</sup> is gone, at 7 this morning—the last of the great race, who were the meet companions of our elder gods; no such women now. She was a true

<sup>1</sup> Jess was the name of the carrier's horse.

<sup>2</sup> Mrs. Cuninghame (Miss Trotter of Mortonhall), widow of Lord Cuninghame.

# 1877] Letters of Dr. John Brown

Autochthon, a child of the soil, Scotch in face, in voice, in nature, in figure, in shrewdness, in humour, in heart. All are going now. I have far more dead friends than living.—With best regards and thanks, yours ever truly, J. BROWN.

If you have not read *A Scottish Probationer*, get it. There is vulgarity and U.P.ism (which I like and you don't), but there is also true humour and genius.

## CCLXXXVIII. To MISS GLASS

23 RUTLAND STREET, EDINBURGH, *March 5* [1878].

MY DEAR MARGT.—I was very glad to see your unforgotten hand; it is sad and not sad to run back all these years. Thanks for the papers; I am not an Antivivisectionist, in the ordinary sense. I think great good to the human race, and to knowledge of the true kind, has come from experiments on living animals, always under the restrictions of a sense of what every feeling and conscientious man must feel in such circumstances; and I feel sure that in this country, and especially in Edinburgh, Vivisection, when done at all (which is very rare), is done with the *minimum* of suffering, and with an adequate motive. At the same time, I have no doubt good will come of Mrs. Gillespie's prize; truth is always the winner in the long run, and if the subject is honestly and temperately handled, what we all have at heart, the good of man and beast, is sure to gain. But there has been much unjust and ignorant abuse among the extreme Antivivisectionists. This I know from my own experience, and from my knowledge of the men abused—men such as my brother and Dr. Allen Thomson, etc. etc., whose hearts are as tender and their consciences as strict and imperative and clear-sighted as any men's or women's (!). I wish you and the public and Mrs. Gillespie and all good people would have a little more faith in their fellow-creatures, and not think them brutes and demons! There's for you! not that I think you and your friend do this, but many good people do. Be assured that in this City of Edinburgh there is no *Cruelty* exercised by Master or Students, and the *operation* is always performed by the masters, and with the *minimum* of pain, and strictly in accordance with Mr. Cross<sup>1</sup> and his commandments. And so enough, and perhaps more than enough, of this! not

<sup>1</sup> Then Home Secretary.



## Letters of Dr. John Brown [1878

the less thanks for the circular, which is very well expressed, fair and temperate, and very properly intimating that "rancour and bitterness of style" disqualifies. . . . I read Ticknor, every word, with great interest; but I like his book<sup>1</sup> better than himself. That book was his *raison d'être*; he was, I believe, dry and proud at home, and yet he had a heart. Have you seen Sumner's 2 Vols. ?<sup>2</sup> Very curiously, he had the same strange faculty of getting into the heart of the highest English society; he is without humour, like a flower without fragrance or a fruit without flavour. Have you seen the *Life of a Scottish Probationer*? surely you must have; if not, get it and devour it; it is full of humour and flavour; tell me if you have read it. Isabella sends her love and contrition. . . . My John is well; it is 14 years past on the 6th of Jany. since his mother was taken away. . . .

My love to yourself and to Kitty.—Ever yrs. affectly.,  
J. BROWN.

Get Colonel Meadows Taylor's *My Life*, and a novel just out called *A Battle Lost*—very good, quiet, lively, and wholesome. I remember now that you have read the *Probationer*. I forget everything.

### CCLXXXIX. To MRS. RICHMOND RITCHIE<sup>3</sup>

14th Aug. 1878.

MY DEAR "ANN RITCHIE"—What a start of pleasure I got when I came to "born Thackeray"! I thought I knew the hand, and yet who "Ann Ritchie" was, I could not divine. It was good in you to write and tell me of your happiness and of the dear little daughter. Many a thought of you have I had since I heard of your marriage. If I had been any one else I would have at once written and wished you and him all joy. Is he the son of that greatly good Cousin to whom your father dedicates (is it?) *The Newcomes*? and whose death he so deplored? I wish I could see you, but I'll never see London again. I suppose John Ruskin and the Severns and the Mellys are away from Coniston. I have injured them and Miss Beever beyond forgiveness, by never answering their letters. Do you know where and how he is? . . .

It is all very well giving "Richmond" dear little daughters

<sup>1</sup> *History of Spanish Literature.*

<sup>2</sup> *Life of Charles Richard Sumner, Bishop of Winchester.*

<sup>3</sup> Now Lady Richmond Ritchie.

## 1878] Letters of Dr. John Brown

and sons, but this won't excuse you from going on with your and our other family. How delightful they are! I never read them without *his* voice being in my ear; you are the daughter of his mind. How proud he was of that paper in the *Cornhill* and of his august Dressing-gown! Is it not a comfort to see how secure his place is now? I am sorry your husband has had such a short holiday; you should come and see Loch Maree and Skye and the unspeakable Coolins. You would enjoy that grand old keep of Belted Hill and its Mistress. Good-bye, my dear friend, you have brightened my dark day a bit.—Ever affectionately,  
J. BROWN.

### CCXC. To JOHN RUSKIN

23 RUTLAND STREET, EDINBURGH, 2d October [1878?].

MY DEAR FRIEND—Thanks for your words from Lucca. . . . I gave myself up on Sunday Evening for some hours to going over the plates of *Modern Painters*. I would say more easily to any one than yourself what was the feeling that grew upon me as I scrutinised their old and ever new lines of feeling and power. You should be thankful to God every night you lay down your head for having done them.

I see Matthew Arnold is coming nearer the God of Israel and Paul in his defence of himself in the October *Contemporary*. He says God is "The *Eternal*" (this time a large E) "not ourselves, that (he might say *who*) makes for righteousness." I would willingly adopt his name, I know none fuller and less utterly inadequate than—The *Eternal*. What a sinewy, delightful style Arnold's is—and he plainly knows what *style* means. I have got a lovely penwiper made of the eyes of the peacock's tail from "Susie,"—but then I never wipe my pen. Come back strong and hearty, and come and meet me at Sweetheart's Abbey near Dumfries and see Castle Laverock and Criffel and the Solway sands.—Yours ever, J. B.

### CCXCI. To THE SAME<sup>1</sup>

23 RUTLAND STREET, EDINBURGH, 19th October 1878.

MY DEAR FRIEND—You are gooder than you think yourself. On my return home on Tuesday I saw these precious things of Turner's and yours, and now, to-day, here is your letter and those birds' eyes and beaks. I'll be sure to return

<sup>1</sup> See Ruskin's Letter, No. XXIII.

## Letters of Dr. John Brown [1878

them, but would like to compare them with Bewick, of whose genius I am fuller than ever. We quite understand the sparkle and the watchfulness and the lurid glare, and the power of the "hood." What a pair of eyes you have! The Turners are delightful, so modest, so little display for display's sake, so none at all, and what a dog! the corner of his mouth! his tail, the mastery everywhere, the maximum of effect, with the minimum of means. But yours went still more to my heart, and my wonder too. (By the bye, Turner's drawings are of Crichton Castle, not of Borthwick Castle, and of Roslin Castle, not Hawthornden.) The most delicious of all your drawings is the Low Calton, with Donaldson's last "unto his last"! How I knew every line of it, every wrinkle of the old roof, which is like Prout, but liker Ruskin and the Stirlings. That Ben is not him of Lomond but of Ledi. What a bit of drawing that on the left hand in the Peterborough, and Roslin inside and out, only I wish you had made the doorstep hollowed as it was, and surely the 'prentice pillar's twist of wreath was greater. What we all felt was, that if you had not been born with a silver spoon in your mouth, and had had to make your own living, you would have been a great Painter, and we might have lost *Modern Painters* and much else.

The Calais drawing is worth £50 to me, if I had it to give; but I'll say nothing more, I only meant to thank you, and assure you of our delight in having seen these things. Miss Melly will bring up the big parcel. Were you at Hawarden? Do try be as stupid as is your nature to, and go on with Scott and Bewick, but not furiously. I have got that little book, *Biography of John Ruskin*. It is a marvel, and what voluminosity, and all not there. Who did it?

What an awful calamity and crime this Bank Cataclysm<sup>1</sup> is; it will put Scotland back a generation. It is an enormous social crime, and will, I trust, be treated so by the Law. . . . We are glad you like the cakes, and laughed well at the Melrosey dentil. Do you know Constable's Life of his Father? If you do not, you should get it; it clears up Scott's money matters better than any elsewhere.—Yours ever affectionately,

J. B.

Our best love to Mrs. Severn.

<sup>1</sup> The City of Glasgow Bank had stopped payment.

CCXCII. To THE SAME<sup>1</sup>

23 RUTLAND STREET, EDINBURGH, 22nd October 1878.

MY DEAR FRIEND—You have made us all very happy and rich and grateful; may it (the double gift) return fourfold unto you! What a drawing for a 14 years' old boy that of Dijon, such patience and truth, and the "Mops and the Melons." There has been nothing in Scotland like this infernal Bank since Flodden and Darien in villainy. We can speak and think of nothing else; and the men who did it all were Sabbath School teachers, and built churches (with the Shareholders' money), and wouldn't read a Monday newspaper because there was "Sabbath" work on it. Are we appropinquating the end? Are all the gigs about to be burnt up? Our love to you all and to the darling Susie. I am delighted to see *Frondees* in the 3rd edition. . . .—  
Yours ever, J. BROWN.

## CCXCIII. To SIR GEORGE REID

23 RUTLAND STREET, EDINBURGH, 6th Novr. 1878.

MY DEAR GENIUS—I ought long ago to have thanked you for that photograph (you have been inspired as to Johnnie)<sup>2</sup> and for your kind note, and not less so for your kind face at the station. I am delighted with Macduff and that sunny cottage, quite exquisite both, and Mrs. Birse and her gum-flowers and Paisley shawl and her bitter eyes, quite capital. How is the portrait of Mr. Greathead?<sup>3</sup> I wish you had made the eyes looking at you, instead of away into—where? and I don't feel sure of the light waistcoat. I want you to make it one of your very best. What an etching you could make of him in his big wide-awake!

Robertson Smith was in great force. You will see Irvine Smith's glorious "Zurich," and you will see a drawing of a dog by Turner, which Ruskin has given me, and also a beautiful sketch by himself.

How is the father, and the mother with the fine eyes, and the 2 Maidens, and the two boys, and Rab, and the Goat? Barclay showed me the monogram from Towie.

<sup>1</sup> See Ruskin's Letter, No. XXIII.<sup>2</sup> Illustrated Edition of *Johnny Gibb of Gushetneuk*, ultimately published in 1880.<sup>3</sup> Mr. Macdonald, of Kepplestone.

## Letters of Dr. John Brown [1878

Ruskin could not let "Montrose" alone—always coming back to it.

I have been seeing some exquisite Mansons, especially "The Haunted Well."—Yours and St. Luke's<sup>1</sup> ever and much,  
J. B.

### CCXCIV. To Miss C. BARCLAY

23 RUTLAND STREET, EDINBURGH, *Saturday* [Novr. 23d, 1878].

MY DEAR OLD CONSTANTIA—Thank your Mother for her letter; the lumbago is better, but not gone, and I got to Bülow's Concert to-day. I have not enjoyed anything of a public kind so much for long. It was entirely Beethoven, and seemed to me as much better than a Concert of selection as is a bottle of the best wine to single glasses of a variety of wines—a glass of Mozart, of Haydn, of Weber, etc. etc. One got steeped in the Beethoven element, and it was less tiresome than almost any concert I remember. Fancy his playing 2½ hours entirely from memory, and such subtle, rapid, involved passages. We had the two Berries (Berrys) and Miss Hansen last night, and Jane and Nelly and Uncle Walter, who was most pleasant. Gerty and her cousin play very well; indeed, the cousin plays as well as I ever remember any one playing, and she is as good as her playing. If I were 27 or so and without impediment I would gladly fall in love with her. . . . How are you? . . . What are you reading? and thinking? How is yourself, that which is your essence? . . . —Yours and all's affectionately,  
J. B.

A worthy, depressed shoemaker was explaining all his miseries, inward and outward, to his minister, finishing up with, "And besides, the Sweep ower the street has bocht my hoose and is gaun tae pit me oot." This climax of woe the minister tried to meet in various ways, but in vain, so on leaving he advised Jeems to "*lay it before the Lord*." In a fortnight the minister called and found Jeems quite cheery, whistling away on his *Crepida*. "Ye're better I see, James; how is that?" "Oh, Sir, *I did as you bade me, and the Sweep's deed!*"

This is for your mother.

<sup>1</sup> The name of Sir George Reid's Aberdeen residence.

1879] Letters of Dr. John Brown

CCXCV. To HIS SISTER MRS. WILSON

[Date uncertain.]

Willie Robertson (of Irvine)<sup>1</sup> has been to-day pouring out upon Predestination, Fra Angelico, and the origin of the Etruscans, and 50 other things; he is the gifted and the copious. Here is a good piece of South Country vernacular. The Duke of Buccleuch asked one of his farmers what kind of a day it was going to be.

“Weel, y’r Grace, it’s like it’ll be shoors,  
Langtailed shoors,  
Wi’ rain atween,  
And it’ll be Kittle to plump,  
But it’ll no be a wecht o’ weet.”

—Yrs. and James’s and the Children’s affectly.,

J. BROWN.

CCXCVI. To P. W. CAMPBELL, W.S.

April 1, 1879.

MY DEAR SIR—Thanks very much for your two notes and for the notice of my cousin’s (W. E. Gladstone’s) (his Aunt was my Uncle’s Wife) *Reviews and Essays*. I must get them, but my appetite for reading is very poor. I would need some mental pepsine. I think more of Mr. Gladstone as a Statesman than as a writer, and most of all as a financier. I think there is a nimiousness or too muchness often about him from his superfluity of energy. Still, he is the biggest man of our party; but he is ignorant of human nature, and, as old Ld. Dunfermline said to me 30 years ago, “he is a monk.” He did not, of course, say this thinking him, as the windy and foolish — does, a Jesuit in disguise, but as being a not worldly-wise man. But why am I treating you to this long screed? I suppose we may hear any post that that strong-brained and strong-hearted old man is gone.<sup>2</sup> He was very fond of your uncle, and well he might.—Yours truly,

J. BROWN.

<sup>1</sup> The Rev. William B. Robertson, D.D.

<sup>2</sup> Kennedy of Dunure died on the day this note was written.

# Letters of Dr. John Brown [1879

## CCXCVII. To MISS E. T. M'LAREN

23 RUTLAND STREET, EDINBURGH, 19 April 1879.

MY DEAR CECY—You heap coals of fire on my head, though, by the bye, it hardly holds water that, but you are “contrariwise blessing.” I have been and am so angry at myself for never writing and saying how we all enjoyed that last letter. You are good, and that letter of to-night’s is pleasant to the taste. . . .

Get Fanny Kemble’s *Records of a Girlhood*; it is better than anybody on Reciprocity.<sup>1</sup> You did well to draw that line. Isabella is very thin and worn and old, and often looks as if she might awaken elsewhere any morning; but I must not vex and bore you. I wish I were good and happy, and then wouldn’t I enjoy Rotten Row with you, and criticise Ethel and Clive? I know them perfectly too. I have been reading a clever but unsavoury book on French Novelists and Poets by Mr. James, jun., the Author of *The American* (a clever but unhappy book you should read). What a rotten set these De Mussets and Gautiers and Balzacs and George Sands!—the very “superfluity of naughtiness.” *Sin*, the vilest forms of it, seems to them the most interesting and the most entertaining and pleasant of all things, and yet where do you find such depths of misery and wasted, horrible lives. The lady who said, “Ices were so delicious, it was a pity taking them wasn’t a sin,” is typical. They indeed say and do “Evil, be thou my good,” and yet how clever, how devilish clever, such insight! such expression, such perfect expression of thoughts and feelings that should never be expressed, to their very uttermost fibrillæ! And now, my dear Cecy, writing this has done me some cheer, I dare not say good; so write when you can, you are always welcome, in your letters or in 23, where we all miss you. You will not be long now. “Haste ye back again,” as Miss Stirling Graham used to say and look.—Ever affectionately,  
J. BROWN.

## CCXCVIII. To JOHN TAYLOR BROWN

[July 1879.]

. . . I thought of you when I read these lines by Lady John Scott; do you know them?

<sup>1</sup> A book which Dr. Brown’s correspondent had been advised to read.

# 1879] Letters of Dr. John Brown

Oh ! wild and stormy Lammermoors !  
 Would I could feel once more  
 The cold north wind, the wintry blast  
 That sweeps thy Mountains o'er !  
 Would I could see thy drifted snows  
 Deep, deep in cleuch and glen,  
 And hear the scream of the wild birds,  
 And was free on thy hills again !

I hate this dreary Southern land,  
 I weary day by day  
 For the music of thy many streams  
 In the birch woods far away.  
 From all I love they banish me,  
 But my thoughts they cannot chain,  
 And they bear me back, wild Lammermoors !  
 To thy far-off hills again.

I shall never be on the Lammermoors again ; it must be 40 years since I was on the top of L. Law with I—— and X——, and in love (in a way) with I——.

. . . I am reading Chapman's *Odyssey* slowly and with great relish ; a wonderful poem—read it. I sort of promised to spend to-day at Banchory with John and Mary Brown, but my courage failed me, and I am suffering accordingly. Write me soon again, and do be good to yourself, and take your breakfast in bed ; do not go out for your morning walk.

## 1880-1882

In the summer of 1881 Dr. Brown went with Professor and Mrs. Crum Brown and John Taylor Brown to the Western Highlands. The following reference to this tour appeared the day after Dr. Brown's death, in an article in the *Scotsman*, from the pen of the Rev. Dr. Walter C. Smith :—

"I do not know that I ever saw all the sweetness and purity of his soul, the quality of his heart and its earnest thoughtfulness, as well as I did last summer, during a happy week in the West Highlands. That will remain to me 'a possession of an inheritance for ever.' Glen Nevis, Loch Treig, Spean Bridge, and the parallel roads of Glen Roy—what a glory he threw over them ! I shall never think of them without that wistful, beautiful face smiling through their mists."



## Letters of Dr. John Brown [1880

During the winter months of 1881 and the spring of 1882 Dr. Brown was exceedingly well, and he did not refuse, as he had done for some years, to dine quietly with intimate, congenial friends. The light of old days shone again, and one sign of renewed cheerfulness is seen in the reappearance of passages, or whole letters, of purest nonsense, a kind of triumphant fooling which came quite naturally to him. He often used it at the expense of his dearest friends, who thoroughly understood and enjoyed it.

In January 1882 a new series of *Horæ Subsecivæ*, entitled *John Leech and Other Papers*, came almost as a happy surprise. A second edition was soon called for, the preface to which is dated March 15. On the day of its issue Dr. Brown came into his dining-room at lunch time, holding aloft a copy of the book, and calling out in the tone of the newspaper boys, "Second Edition, Second Edition."

### CCXCIX. To SIR GEORGE REID

23 RUTLAND STREET, EDINBURGH, 2d Jan. 1880.

MY DEAR GEORGE REID—I do wish you may not feel half so much angry and hurt at Ruskin's letter as I do. It is most unjust, and in a true sense most unkind to us all. He could not have done more than give one glance to the book.<sup>1</sup> And we know that your drawing was careful to a marvel, as he himself admiringly said when he saw "Montrose." I am not going to write more, I am so upset and angry about this. Of course we know what we think and feel and know about the book, and perhaps it is foolish to be *very* angry at that strange man, but—— My best wishes for you and all at St. Luke's, and all who love it and are loved by it! I suppose Archie<sup>2</sup> will soon be here. I hear excellent things about his doings and yours at Aviemore, etc. All here, my sister and John (who likes "George Reid" more than most, and he is not a glutton in his likings) and myself, send our best regards. I wish you as well as your sister were about to be married; wish her and the man all joy.—Ever affectly.,

J. BROWN.

I warned Gibson, but I never expected anything like this.

<sup>1</sup> A Memoir of George Paul Chalmers, by Mr. Alexander Gibson and Mr. J. F. White, published in 1879, with illustrations by Sir George Reid. Dr. Brown had sent a copy to Mr. Ruskin.

<sup>2</sup> Brother of Sir George Reid.

## 1880] Letters of Dr. John Brown

### CCC. To HIS SISTER MRS. WILSON

23 RUTLAND STREET, EDINBURGH, 2 April 1880.

DEAREST JANE—Thank Isabella for her letter, and that most epistolary Jane for all her really delightful ones. What a turn of the political tide; it is a spring tide and coming in like a flood. It has in a sort of dead-alive way excited me in spite of myself. Gladstone called for me, and I called for him, and we missed each other. I should have made myself see him, but the “myself” is too much often for the “I.” Have you seen the new *Fors*? It is queer, of course. He gives an account of his illness, of his madness. He says he went mad because nobody, and especially his friends, would listen to him, and that nobody believed his report on the Universe, and then he attacks Froude for not saying that the former times were better than these. Have you seen Froude’s *Bunyan*?—full of thought and a strange sympathy with much of Bunyan, though he seems to say religion is to *reason* impossible, not to faith, and perhaps there is much in this.

What does the maker of Simplicity’s Catechism say?<sup>1</sup> Read C. Lamb’s letters to Manning.

Yours and James’s and the children’s ever affectionately,  
J. BROWN.

### CCCI. To PRINCIPAL SHAIRP<sup>2</sup>

GLEN HILL, NEAR ABERDEEN [21st September 1880].

MY DEAR FRIEND—. . . Why set poets for ever against each other? There is one glory of the sun, and another glory of the moon, and one star differeth from another star, not only in the quantity but also in the quality of its glory. What you wrote in 1864 was felt by me to be true, and what Coleridge in his *Biographia Literaria* true also. To me Wordsworth’s great defect is his want of the sense of the ludicrous, of the incongruous—of humour. I feel this more than his prosiness: but that he was a great poet, the greatest of our century, I never doubt. His is the poetry of intellect and of feeling—of humanity in the abstract chiefly; and yet what more human than “The Old Cumberland Beggar”? Byron when he is a poet—which very often he is not,

<sup>1</sup> Mrs. Wilson compiled a simple Catechism for children.

<sup>2</sup> Published in *Principal Shairp and his Friends*, edited by W. Knight.

## Letters of Dr. John Brown [1880

though always eloquent—is the poet of passion, of the “heart tumult”; but he would have been a greater poet had he had the deep feeling, the quiet, steady, human-heartedness of Wordsworth. . . . —Ever affectionately,  
J. B.

### CCCII. To LADY MINTO

23 RUTLAND STREET, EDINBURGH, 14th November 1880.

DEAR LADY MINTO—It is a great pleasure to get your letter. I was very happy to see the bright, kind, sincere face of Lord Melgund; it brought all Minto before my eyes. How unhurt by the world he is! He is the likeliest to you of the 4, and in more than looks. His only fault is his not marrying, as I told him. I will do my best to get another Punch for you; *felix ille*, but it is not easy to get such a paragon, and I am out of the dog line, and indeed out of all lines now. I have almost lost my book appetite. . . . Thanks for the pheasants, one of which we have devoured gratefully. I have not got Mr. Trevelyan's *Fox*; this shows my apathy, but reviews so often take off the edge of one's appetite. I think he is in some matters of style an improvement on his great, his prodigious uncle. You are right, too much “Dogmatism and daubing,” often a historical panorama rather than a historical picture, in the highest sense. I don't wonder you like the *Travels with a Donkey*; it is just what you say of it, true genius, a new liquor, fresh and aromatic. . . . He<sup>1</sup> is son of Thomas Stevenson, Civil Engineer, “the Family Theologian,” and grandson of the grand old Bell Rock man. He wrote in the *Cornhill* some time ago the wisest and best words, since Carlyle, on Burns, on whom of late far too much has been written; and he has a clever little book, *An Inland Voyage in France in a Canoe*, which he made with Sir James Simpson's son Walter; and he has a paper on the old Capital of California in this month's *Fraser*, full of charm in feeling and description. Did you ever read Mark Napier's Life of John Napier (of the Logarithms) of Merchiston? It is very good, not only as an account of one of the greatest of Scotsmen, but as vivifying the wild history of Scotland of his time. Have you seen Mark Napier's posthumous demolition of that genealogical Fraser? If I may say anything will gladden me, it will be to see Hugh and his wife, and indeed any of that dear old time

<sup>1</sup> R. L. Stevenson.

## 1880] Letters of Dr. John Brown

at Minto. I hope Fitz's wife is as good as himself. I follow Arthur all through the newspapers. He is fast justifying his being where he is. Remember me to them all. I hope, if you are in Edinburgh, I may see you. I hope you have been the better of Algiers. . . . I met Lowell when here and like him greatly—a "full man," as well knowledge as Sir Henry Taylor, but full also of original fun—a great poet, I think. Do you know him and his works well? I would much rather be him than Tennyson or Browning; there is more of the light of common day, more naturalness in thought and word, and no want of depth or tenderness, with humour of the stronger and rarest flavour. He told me he crossed the Atlantic with Thackeray, Clough, and Lowe—such a four-some! He talked a great deal about *Don Quixote*, which I had just been slowly reading, and I was delighted to hear his praises. But he says it is dreadful to read him in English. He looks upon Cervantes as on the same shelf with Homer, Shakespeare, and Dante, primary and unapproachable. Can you read Spanish? How is Sir Henry Taylor? I saw but couldn't read a poor, verbose paper on him in the last *Nineteenth Century*. But why am I running on at such a rate? It is your fault in a measure I seldom write so much, for I seldom am awakened.

I am sure Lord Minto must feel the dreadful scandal of Ireland. If we could catch a Cromwell and send him over! Surely one thing they should do—abolish *pro tempore* trial by Jury in Criminal cases, or in all. But I must draw bridle. You have brought some life into my brain, which is now like a mouth without teeth, and whose memory has struck work.

Thanks again for your letter.—Ever truly yours and  
Lord Minto's and Lord Melgund's, J. BROWN.

### CCCIII. To SIR GEORGE REID

23 RUTLAND ST., Nov. 22, 1880.

MY DEAR GENIUS AND GEORGE—How are they over the way? I hope bettering. I don't like to trouble the beautiful-eyed wife; so will you, like a good-natured soul, give me one of your microscopic lines? I hope all are well at St. Lukes, from Rab downwards. I wish St. Lukes were here. I saw Irvine Smith to-day; he is to be married next week, to the Baroness Burdett-Coutts. Gibson has become an elder in the Free Tolbooth. My best regards to all in St. Lukes.  
—Yrs. ever and much, J. BROWN.

# Letters of Dr. John Brown [1880

## CCCIV. TO THE SAME

23 RUTLAND STREET, EDINBURGH, 29th Novr. 1880.

MY DEAR JEE JEE<sup>1</sup>—Thanks for yours. I have got a magnifying glass for it.<sup>2</sup> The Cartoon for Job is immensely run upon. The Lord President and Bailie Colston and Dr. Macgregor were uncivil to each other in forcing their way into Irvine Smith's, where I T is at present. The Translators of the Bible—I mean the Revisers of it—have agreed to put it into the Authorised-to-be version, and it is to go off to-night to Rajon. Your nose, blighted and indeed what the Surgeons call sphacelated, and the servant's cap and her look of utter indifference, are greatly admired. Whyte of St. George's and Sir Harry are to preach rival sermons on it, next Lord's day.

J. B.

## CCCV. TO REV. DR. PORTER, Master of Peterhouse, Cambridge

23 RUTLAND STREET, EDINBURGH, 8th Decr. 1880.

MY DEAR MASTER OF PETERHOUSE—This will be given you by my friend Mr. Fraser, who will tell his own story. Any help or advice you can give him will make him and me grateful. Alexr. is up to *par*, but must spare his brain more and go earlier to bed, and get quit of the débris of his body by more walking. Jane<sup>3</sup> gets more and more intolerable and offensive, stingy to meanness, fat, untidy in her person, giving Alexr. poor meat, worse soup, and worser wine, never asking his relations (us), and when she does giving them little and bad. House neglected, servants silently raging, accounts unpaid, even the seat rent (U.P.). It is a great pain to me to tell and to you to receive such accounts, but *magna est veritas*, as Plato says. When are you coming down to see into this state of things? Keep it from her mother. Bessie knows and Mrs. Tait—and both are staunch—so that *as yet* it is not got to Crumlin Road.

<sup>1</sup> Phonetic spelling of the initial letters of Genius and George. See preceding letter.

<sup>2</sup> The handwriting was exceedingly small.

<sup>3</sup> Mrs. Crum Brown, Dr. Porter's sister. The ludicrous absurdity of this letter will be appreciated most by those—and they are many—who have enjoyed the abounding hospitality of Professor and Mrs. Crum Brown. Letter CCCXIV is written in the same vein of humorous extravagance.

## 1880] Letters of Dr. John Brown

I hope you are (both) well and in good cheer. When you come Jane gets up a tolerable dinner for you, and what she calls scoloped oysters, but if you look in unawares you'll go home broken-hearted, as our poor dear Alexr. already is—that is the real reason why he comes so late to bed.—Yours and Mrs. Porter's ever truly and absurdly (very),

J. BROWN.

### CCCVI. To MISS WILSON

23 RUTLAND STREET, EDINBURGH, 18th December 1880.

MY DEAR M A G G I E—We are going to be very happy to have you for a day; the bed is being lengthened and (by your Mother's advice) *strengthened*. Charlie will meet you at the train with a cab and the B A N D of the 196th Regiment, and you will go in triumph, the cab being open and warm bottles for your feet, along Princes Street. There will (not) be a triumphal Arch at Rutland Street, but there will be a warm bowl of B E E F T E A presented to you on the threshold of No. 23, and John will play a March from Beethoven on the J E W S' harp through the lobby, and you know you must be kind and merciful to us, and not frighten me; so good-bye; my love to yourself and to G U S.<sup>1</sup>—Your affectionate and Q U E E R Uncle,

J E Y E B E E.

### CCCVII. To THE SAME

23 RUTLAND STREET, EDINBURGH,  
5 minutes after the first letter.

MY DEAR MAGGIE—I have stupidly addressed my letter to you as Miss Maggie *Brown*. You know you are  $\frac{1}{2}$  a Brown, so you will claim it. Do you prefer beef-tea to potato soup<sup>2</sup> made with good stock? If so, write to—Yours affectionately and stupidly,

J. BROWN.

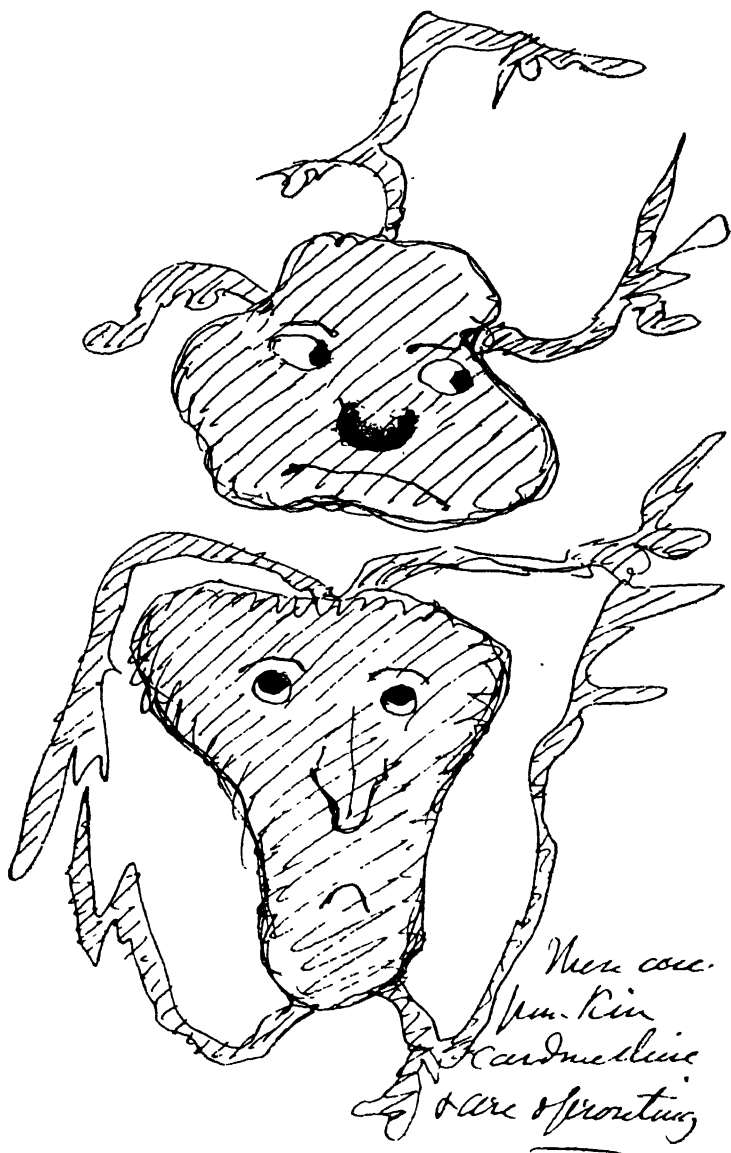
### CCCVIII. To THE SAME

23 RUTLAND STREET, EDINBURGH, 31 Jan. 1881.

MY DEAR M A G G I E—It was “affy soother” to get your letter. I hope the weeks will get shorter. I am afraid to write to Mary Gee-Tee,<sup>1</sup> but I send her a drawing after Sir

<sup>1</sup> Mary Guthrie Tait, daughter of Professor Tait.

<sup>2</sup> See Sketch on next page.



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SKETCH IN LETTER TO MISS WILSON.

# 1881] Letters of Dr. John Brown

Joshua Reynolds. I am glad the freezing is over; it froze my tongue. Mr., that is Dr., Sandford, Gus's friend, said to me yesterday, "This is the ice age," and I said, "It is not a nice age"—awfully clever this? Aunt is lying on the sofa reading a Novel! John is out. I am writing to a big, very disagreeable girl; Charlie is well. He was taken up to the police office for knocking off the Lord Provost's H A T. He is to be imprisoned for the natural term of his life if he doesn't embrace the Roman Catholic religion; he says he would rather embrace YOU! Good-night, my dear LITTLE GURL.

Give my LOVE to Ada Dundas, and thank her for her letter; how well she writes. My profound affection and *terror* to G U S.—Your absurd old Uncle,

J E Y E B E E.

## CCCIX. To MRS. SEVERN

23 RUTLAND STREET, EDINBURGH, 5th February 1881.

MY DEAR FRIEND—Don't be alarmed; this is only to thank and explain. The intermittent pulse is the mind's pulse, not the body's. I have not the steady flow of feeling and of its expression which you and the good have, but you will still write to me though I don't so often write to you—a most ungallant speech! You are to be envied, to listen to that wondrous tongue; what a flow of soul! He is a Spring, not a pump; his letters and his talk are quite as good as his books. I had a warm-hearted little letter from him yesterday. He should be kinder to his hands.—Yours ever affectionately,

J. BROWN.

## CCCX. To HIS SON

SPEAN BRIDGE HOTEL, 19th August [1881].

MY DEAR JOHN—Here we are, having failed to get in at the Bridge of Roy, for which I am and I am not sorry, as this is a better inn, and not so full. The weather has been rainy to-day. Yesterday it was fine, and we went to Loch Ericht. To-day we drove to Laggan and along the side of the Lake; very beautiful, but it rained almost constantly. You know the road. We did not go down to the Monessie falls on the Spean. It was there your mother was left sitting on a stone till her father and mother went down to the Falls; they



## Letters of Dr. John Brown [1881

stayed longer than they thought, and found her sitting pale and silent, with the tears rolling down her cheeks; she was 5 years old. We don't know what our plans are; we shall stay here till Monday. I hope you are comfortable. There seem to be great doubts as to Arisaig. We saw the parallel roads in Glen Spean, and mean to go to Glen Roy to-morrow, but I am very bad at walking.—Yours affectly., J. BROWN.

They all send their love to you.

### CCCXI. To PRINCIPAL SHAIRP<sup>1</sup>

[1881.]

. . . As for Chaucer, in his own line he is primary. In description he is an inspired child, finding himself in the *Juventus mundi*, and getting the first crush of the grapes. It is a pity there is so much animalism here and there; though, in a sense, of a not so unwholesome kind in him; but it is not suited to our time. "The Wife of Bath" is worse than "The Jolly Beggars"—though full of nature and freshness. . . . "The Knight's Tale" is exquisite: "Up rose the Sun and up rose Emily"; and Griselda is fine: "She never was idle but when she slept." I think I am quoting it wrong, but that is the sense. . . . Do you know Lowell's (the American) poems? If not, get them. He is out of sight the greatest poet our cousins have yet sent forth, both in reach of thought and feeling, and humour, and in general felicity of language and spontaneity. Whittier comes nearest him; Longfellow is a sort of male Mrs. Hemans. But get Lowell, and study him. His *Biglow Papers* will disquiet your fine old Tory soul, but they are full of wit and wisdom and freshness of nature.

How glorious Ben Lawers will be looking from your home, especially if he has those delicate mists clinging to his shoulders and entangling the sunlight.

### CCCXII. To MISS E. T. M'LAREN

23 RUTLAND STREET, EDINBURGH [7th Sept. 1881].

MY DEAR CECY—I got your welcome and relishing (Ben Jonson's word) letter, and had not the heart to answer it. Why is this? It is this permanent state of "without hope"

<sup>1</sup> Published in *Principal Shairp and his Friends*, edited by W. Knight.

which kills everything but itself. Thank you for it, and for all your goodness, and your being liker yourself than like anybody else. You are now in what is to me a sort of sacred place.<sup>1</sup> There "we" got the grey pony and the strong James Grieve, the guide (from Yarrow), and she rode and I walked to the top of Cairngorm in a wild tempest of wind. You would be a small girl then. I wish you could get to the top of Cairngorm and look down into Loch Avon. J. T. B. and I came back on Saturday, leaving Alexander and his Jane at Glenelg. Were I happy inside I could not have enjoyed myself more than in this our wandering—First, to Dalwhinnie. . . . 2nd, To Spean Bridge Inn, delightful, Beer unspeakable, Alexander interminable and omniscient and delightful, Jane capital, quite, so full of forethought and real kindness, and rejoicing in her man and friend. 3d, After 8 days to Arisaig by Loch Eil and Glenfinnan, perfect days, heaven and earth making one holiday (is that it? or what is that? or it?), such a sky, with innocent fleecy clouds entangling the sunlight and making little tabernacles of it, the Lakes clear as a *transparent* looking-glass, as said an old Divine to me from Biggar pulpit, with that reflection of Heaven which always charms and saddens, and makes you think there is another heaven below. 4th, To Glenelg, having to wait 5 hours on the rocks at Rudh Arisaig; it was lovely weather, and the Coolin Hills looked like the very gates of heaven, lovely and inapproachable. I hope you have had the same weather. 5th, To Oban, abominable, swarming with *towerists* and swaddled young women with their awful beetle-like bodices, which distress me (and I should think and hope them) much. 6th, Home by Glen Ogle, Loch Lubnaig, and the Haymarket Station! Before you die, you and the 3 beings you happen to like best should secure a perfect day and drive up Glen More from Glenelg Inn, with two horses, and at the watershed behold the Kintail hills and Loch Duich and Ben Attock, and the terrible place where Glomak roars and flashes. It is one of the most wonderful sights in all the Highlands. Tell the Rev. Alexr.<sup>2</sup> it will make him preach a sermon with the strength of the hills in it—such a glorious huddle of hills. And now you have had enough, and I have, for a brief time, forgotten myself, and so good-night. Kate the capital and radiant was here yesterday.—Yours affly.,

J. B.

<sup>1</sup> Aviemore.<sup>2</sup> The Rev. Alex. M'Laren, D.D., Litt.D., Manchester.

## Letters of Dr. John Brown [1881

### CCCXIII. To LADY MINTO

23 RUTLAND STREET, EDINBURGH [1881].

. . . *John Inglesant* I liked somewhat in the first volume, and he died out in the second. It is languid and laborious, and has little of the breath of life. Did you see a very interesting account of Sir Henry Taylor's early life in Lucy Aikin's *Letters to Dr. Channing*? You are right about Cobden, but I like him. He was like a terrier. He kept to the ground and therefore missed much, but he was staunch. I greatly prefer him in character to Bright, with all his eloquence and Saxon words, and fine eyes and voice. He is very right when he is right, but not always, as he thinks, right at all. It must be a great pleasure having Sir Henry Taylor near you,—what a noble life! I wish the world could get his letters to you and yours to him all these years, from girlhood on. I don't want him dead, but I would like to read that book. I fear you have had a very hard time since 1877, but you have the Elliot blood and are a soldier's daughter. Will you remember me very gratefully to Sir Henry? I owe him much of what is best.

I would like sometimes to hear how you are.

### CCCXIV. To MRS. CRUM BROWN

23 RUTLAND STREET, EDINBURGH, 27th Decr. [1881].

MY DEAR JANE—I hope you are comfortably housed at the B. P. Hotel.

I went into No. 8 [Belgrave Crescent]. I didn't need to ring the bell, for the door was wide open, and a red flag waving insolently in the wind; many hurleys and porters, and much coarse language. I fainted on the spot, and was carried into the Elders' and comforted with flagons, and then faced the worst. I found my father's portrait being knocked down by a U.P. Auctioneer for 17/6 to the U.P. Hall Library. I fainted again, and had more flagons, and was able to walk home unassisted. Minie and her assistant were busy poisoning themselves in the back green; the Cook was off to Dr. Woolston; the German stood her ground. I feel better since dinner—potato soup again and the other Bantam hen.—Yrs. and Alexr.'s and the Barclays' ever,

J. B.

## CCCXV. To JOHN RUSKIN

23 RUTLAND STREET, EDINBURGH, 27th December 1881.

MY DEAR FRIEND—I owe you much for some real pleasure this day, of which I stood in need. Here is indeed no “loss of general power, whether in conception or industry”; the “active brightness of the entire soul and life” are here as of old. You burn like iron wire in oxygen, and I often wonder how you survive your own intensity. The Northern Porch is lovely, quite, in the true sense *exquisite*, searched out and expressed to the uttermost by the good (I am sure he is worthy) George Allen and his master. What a delicate glamour there is over it; and I like the brown ink, black is harsh. I hope you have got back Mrs. Severn, and are taking your Oatmeal porridge and cream, and sleeping full 8 hours in the 24. You must have pleasure sometimes in your work—though fierce indignation not seldom lacerates your heart. Did you not like that sentence beginning “a shepherd maid” and ending with “the ruins of the world”? My son and I had two hours at Irvine Smith’s of “Zurich,” “Lucerne; The Bridge in Moonlight,” “Lancaster Sands,” “Shoreham,” and a delicious little drawing of a brick house in his early, humble style, and then we had the *Liber*! wonderful impressions and the unpublished plates.

I heard from Ada Dundas after she had been with you. She dislikes being in Dresden. I immersed myself last night in the two volumes of the *Arrows*, and for a while forgot myself. I hope Connie has made a good recovery. We all send our love and duty to yourself, and kind remembrances to Mrs. Severn.—Yours ever, J. B.

[The following was found among Dr. Brown’s papers, dated 1881. It was evidently intended as part of a sequel to “More of Our Dogs” in the Third Series of *Horæ Subsecivæ*.]

Our present Dog is Bob the fourth. As for Bob the first, his acts and his might and all that he did are they not written in “More of Our Dogs”? Bob the first sleeps in a hole in Badenoch, slain in fell battle with a badger, as fine and game a little soul as ever was in a body. The third was a perfect Dandie of Mr. Nicol Milnes’ breed; he was wretchedly murdered by some young miscreants in Fisherrow harbour;

## Letters of Dr. John Brown [1881

I wish I had the scourging of them for 10 minutes every second day for a month. Our present friend, the Fourth, cost me 50 shillings when quite young and before having Distemper. My only orders to Mr. Lang of Selkirk, the Blenkiron of breeders of Dandies, were "let him be pure and big." Dandies of late years have been getting too small, and have had from the renowned Shem<sup>1</sup> a strain of the bull in them—that spoiled their simplicity. Bob arrived with Robert the Coachman on a chain with much railway information attached to his neck. He was in a general state of consternation; every new sound and sight kept up a perpetual astonishment and readiness for anything horrible. Me he eyed in a very peculiar way, a sort of uncanny interest and horror. This took practical effect when I took off the collar, in his staring at me and then careering out of the street; whistling only spurred him on, and my hurrying after him was the climax. I made after him along Princes Street to the best of my ability. He soon disappeared. I wandered about for some hours questioning Cabmen, and turned up into George Street; here is my friend, tongue out and wearied. The moment he eyed me from afar he was off. . . .

### CCCXVI. TO SIR THEODORE MARTIN

23 RUTLAND STREET, EDINBURGH, 6th Jan. 1882.

MY DEAR SIR THEODORE—Thanks for your letter and for yourself. It is capital—like you as a boy, like you as when I last saw you, and doubtless like you now. *Tres juncti in uno!* I send you *Bibliomania*; there is much in it you will relish. He (J. T. B.) must have been in David Laing's father's shop about the time you astonished us with the Quarto *Rabelais*, a wonderful feat. I was reading *Tom Jones* the other night, with great admiration and comfort. What manliness! what a style! the introductions delicious. I can't read Smollett, at least, not much of him, though his humour is perhaps greater than Fielding's, whose wit is greater. Have you seen the august M. Arnold's "Ode on Stanley"?

<sup>1</sup> Mr. Charles Cook, W.S., writes:—"The renowned Shem was a famous Dandie Dinmont terrier dog, bred in 1839. He was the sire of Dr. Brown's 'John Pym' mentioned in 'Our Dogs.' It is alleged that Shem had through a remote ancestress a cross of bull-dog in his breeding. Be that as it may, Shem was admittedly the most handsome and gamest Dandie of his day."

## 1882] Letters of Dr. John Brown

It seems to me pretentious, thin, and heartless; well worded, of course, but who, standing at his friend's grave, would use the word "cecily"? which, I see from Johnson, Sir Thomas Browne, the delightful old pedant, uses, and "externe"? The great Matthew looks at the Universe—and for that part at God—*through an eyeglass*, one eye shut, and a supreme air; but he writes English as few can.—Yours and the sine quâ non's ever truly,  
J. BROWN.

### CCCXVII. To SIR GEORGE REID

23 RUTLAND STREET, EDINBURGH, 7th Jany. 1882.

MY DEAR G. AND G.—Go over immediately and tell Macdonald that at the Feast at Irvine Smith's last night, there was also Claret of 1858, if he (that is M'D.) attaches any meaning or importance to that; and after you have done that, thank yourself for your letter to me. Poor old Rab, it is sad, and there is something very pathetic in his state being so like the great-headed man's. I am sorry, too, about your father. That grand old Roman, Sir Robert Christison, is, I fear, going to go. Why do we die? I "reluct" from it, especially as to my friends. As Charles Lamb says, I do not like to pass away like a weaver's shuttle. Meg Dods is superb, and the only one of the lot worth a "dam," as *Pet Marjorie* gives it. Are you sleeping better? . . . I saw Mr. Hope's portrait to-day; it is capital, and the handling of the knee attitude capital also; but you are less sombre now, which is better.—Yours and all yours ever affectly.,  
J. B.

### CCCXVIII. To LADY MINTO

23 RUTLAND STREET, EDINBURGH, 9th Jany. 1882.

DEAR LADY MINTO—I often long much to know of you and all yours. You will perhaps appease this longing. Tell me about you all, what books you have read lately, etc., and when we are to get another from you. I have hoped that Hugh would call and let me see his pleasant wife and his own cordial self, and tell me about Lord Minto and Arthur and Fitz.

Have you read the Bishop of St. David's (Thirlwall) Letters to Miss Johnes? If you have, I am sure you would relish them—the strong-brained, strong-hearted old man

## Letters of Dr. John Brown [1882

writing to his young and sort of sweetheart friend. I know a great friend of hers who says she was worthy of such a lover, and that her letters should have been published too. I am reading with a pleasure now all too rare, James Spedding's two Volumes, with the beautiful tribute by Venables. Poor Carlyle! presiding most successfully at the funeral of his own reputation as a man, though not so much as a writer, though his style will (if nothing else) keep him from being a classic. Did you ever read anything wiser or more beautiful than Miss Gordon's farewell letter? . . . I hope you are stronger. . . .—Yours and Lord Minto's and all yours ever truly,  
J. BROWN.

### CCCXIX. TO THE MISSES JOHNSTON

23 RUTLAND STREET, EDINBURGH, 11 Jan. 1882.

MY DEAR TWO—Thanks for letters and for your being what you are, and your mother's children. A good and happy and a healthy New Year to you both! Tell Miss Shepherd that Dr. Begg has joined the Roman Catholic Church and Walter Smith has got his (Dr. B.'s) congregation, after having shot Sir Harry Moncreiff and Robertson Smith each through the left eye, with a pea revolver,—this is curious.

I saw Aunt before she went to Dougalston. Write me as often as you can and tell me all you are and are *not* doing. We had sad news yesterday—Walter Crum's death, at Calcutta, such a fine fellow. There has been a handsome fair man, with a foreign accent and a glass eye, calling repeatedly for me during dinner time, asking your address, and asseverating that you are *both* engaged to him. I think he is a fair-haired (very rare) Arab that you must have met at Algiers. I put him off with a shilling, which goes to your account. He is now a U.P. member in full,—what is your desire regarding him? You see I am as wise as ever, and as dull, and I miss you and her to whom you owe your lives, more and more. Good-bye.—Your affectionate

OLD JEYE BEF.

The singular *Double* engagement may be explained by his polygamic Ancestry.

1882] Letters of Dr. John Brown

CCCXX. To J. IRVINE SMITH

23 RUTLAND STREET, EDINBURGH, *Sunday* [January 1882].

MY DEAR IRVINE SMITH—Let me thank you from my heart for what you have done for the Potted Head,<sup>1</sup> for all the great pains you have taken about Leech, and with such excellent result; and I doubt not you had a hand in the Thackeray too.

May you never need or want when needed such a friend for yourself as you have been to me!—Yours ever truly,  
J. BROWN.

CCCXXI. To LADY MINTO

23 RUTLAND STREET, EDINBURGH, *18th Jan.* 1882.

DEAR LADY MINTO—You must bear the blame of this fresh infliction. Yes, I have read Stanley's last book. It is excellent, and so like the courageous, cordial, free spirit that was his. I like Tulloch too, and thought him right as to Stanley's want of the sense of sin and the need of a Saviour. There can be no religion without dogma, which is just another word for doctrine, a thing to be taught. It is the abuse of dogma that is mischievous, as when Calvin made his followers say there were children in hell not a span long.

My chief excuse for writing now is, my delight with this book, *The Haigs of Bemerside*. Don't you think it is well done? I went and saw the author, a modest, youngish man who is now editor of *Chambers's Journal*, a John Russell, who was once editor of a Galashiels newspaper, and who said to me, with great brightness, that he had been introduced to the Countess of Minto, at Minto. Do you remember him? I wished him much to see your Border Book,<sup>2</sup> but Ruskin refuses to return my copy to me. I do wish you would publish it. . . . I follow Arthur's course with great interest and pleasure. I heard Lyon Playfair to-day—not a heroic politician. That race is dying out. We have lost Sir D. Macnee, a most enjoyable man, a greater humourist than painter. Forgive all this.—Yours ever truly, J. BROWN.

<sup>1</sup> This refers to the Third Series of *Horæ Subsecivæ*, then passing through the press, and to the miscellaneous character of its contents. It includes the articles on Leech and Thackeray.

<sup>2</sup> *Border Sketches*, privately printed.



## Letters of Dr. John Brown [1882

### CCCXXII. To JOHN RUSKIN

23 RUTLAND STREET, EDINBURGH, 10th Feb'y. 1882.

MY DEAR FRIEND—Thanks, as I have so long and so often had to give you, for the joy and comfort of *Proserpina*, Part VII. It is delightful and informing, and more. I am not sure that I agree with you, or perhaps understand you, as to the injured (or deformed?) flowers. Do you call the Bee Ophryd, p. 144, or the dead Nettle (*Lamium album*) injured, or that most undrawable of flowers, Honeysuckle? George Allen has done his best. In IX. I suppose that shadowy, or almost smoky, look of the leaves is indication of a sort of wetness. X. is absolutely perfect in drawing and “pose.” How like a lady she holds herself up and bends her head! That about *Bank* flowers is excellent, and I think quite new. But I must not weary you and your eyes any longer. I hope you are taking care of your body, the instrument of the Soul, as well as its (present) house. My best regards and my sister’s to Mrs. Severn. I saw the robust and tuneful Miss Wakefield the other day. Did she ever sing to you Beethoven’s Hymn of Creation?—Yours ever, my dear, dear friend, affectionately,  
J. BROWN.

P.S.—Your Shakespeare Women owe you much; they should come trooping to you—in your dreams. You are hardly just to Imogen, I think, or to the play.

### CCCXXIII. To MISS MOLYNEUX

22nd February 1882.

As to our controversy on Genius, I believe we are both right. Newton said the only difference between him and many other men, was that he *looked* more and therefore *saw* more; but there is a sense in which genius makes something new—nearly as new as a child. Maker and Poet and Genius all express this. In a true sense everything has from eternity dwelt in God. That is so true what you say of Music like Beethoven’s: it is a glimpse (by the ear) of that eternal Psalm, the true music of the Spheres, and of the Soul of man. Put that among *the Thoughts*, and go on with them. Don’t *make* them; let them come when they list, and we will make a pleasant little Volume of them some day. When

## 1882] Letters of Dr. John Brown

you are writing them, always stop when you are done. I think you will; your words don't outrun your thoughts, as some folk's do.

### CCCXXIV. TO MRS. MARY GRAY WATSON, *née* CRUM

23 RUTLAND STREET, EDINBURGH, *Sunday* [10th April 1882].

MY DEAR MARY—You will be enjoying your Walter. The other two Walters are away and happy, at any rate at rest; so giveth He his beloved sleep. I often wonder if they are conscious, or if they awake at the great day, as if it was a moment since death. The mighty Charles will expiscate this. There is more on the conscious side than not, and it is the more happy; and yet deep, dreamless sleep, what a rest and good! Uncle John of Skelmorlie is here, the queerest and in some ways among the dearest of men, but the most unrestful.

I am reading Froude's *Carlyle*, a dreadful book, but with a terrible charm and suction about it. What says the Megalander about it? It should not in much have ever been done, but Froude does it with superlative power and such language! . . .

Good-night!—Yours and his, W.'s, ever, and Jessie's,

J. B.

### CCCXXV. TO HIS DAUGHTER

23 RUTLAND STREET, EDINBURGH, *Sunday* [10th Apr. 1882].

MY DEAREST HELEN—There is little doing here. I am reading Carlyle's *Life*; it is a very terrible book, but full of a weird interest. Dr. Peddie and his wife and Barbara are at Bridge of Allan. Try and go on steadily with some work; read French, and go through some really thoughtful English book, like Stanley's *Life of Dr. Arnold*, and remember that pleasure is not happiness. I know this to my cost. The 3rd Edition of the book is coming out this week, and I am trying to write something about Mr. Syme and Dr. Scott, and Willie, that marvellous boy. We had a good Lecture from Mr. Forbes<sup>1</sup> to-day on Peter, our Lord warning him. . . . Good-night, my dear child, and may God forgive me for my wants towards you, and bless you with His pardon and peace.

—Yours and dear Katie's ever,

J. B.

<sup>1</sup> The Rev. W. G. Forbes, Dr. Brown's minister.

## Letters of Dr. John Brown [1882

### CCCXXVI. To MISS MOLYNEUX

11th April 1882.

I love the sea, for a while, but it must ebb and flow. The Mediterranean, eternal sameness of sound would madden me—I remember it too well at Mentone—but the sea lifting itself up, and the waves curling their monstrous heads and hanging them, etc. etc. But I am not sure that I would like to live always by the sea; it limits walking—rather among or (better) near mountains and streams and great moorlands.

We were last night at the Reid Concert and had Hallé and his men, and Beethoven's Pastoral Symphony to perfection—glorious and deep as the sea. There is no one like him. He is what Shakespeare and Turner are in their lines. He can express everything—sound every depth of sorrow and despair, and scale victoriously every height of ecstasy and joy. We had much else of Bach and Mozart and Weber and Schubert, and a Bohemian called *Dvorak* (I think), but *he* was first and the rest nowhere. As for Berlioz he is a tuneful, ingenious devil, and Mendelssohn is thin, though tender. I like his "O wert thou in the cauld blast," but his great things I don't care for. Are you knitting those brows of yours? and is anger gathering in those cen? and so good-night! . . .—Yours and the altera ego's ever truly,

J. BROWN.

My sister sends her love.

I hope you are both feeling better. Who is your London Doctor? Perhaps, as Sir Henry tells of the old lady and her daughters, you might be the better of "a little wholesome neglect." Are you angry? I am reading *Endymion*, and indulging, perhaps, too much in what Wordsworth calls the "luxury of disrespect." Such a rigmorole of tawdry, clever, vulgar, stupid, startling stuff I have not seen since *Lothair*. What do you think of his saying, in describing the face of a beautiful woman, "Her nose was a gem"? Or how would you or I like to have a pair of "alabaster arms" thrown round our necks? Commend me to good warm flesh and blood. Now take care of yourself, and try and pass 8 hours of the 24 in deep sleep, and don't read, and above all don't feel too much, till you are as strong as "a horse."

# 1882] Letters of Dr. John Brown

CCCXXVII. TO HIS SISTER MRS. WILSON

*Thursday [13th April 1882].*

MY DEAREST JANE—Thanks for yours—you are philosophers down there. We have sour weather, cold and comfortless. Alexander and Jane hope to get off on Saturday. Tell James that the 2nd Edition is all sold—the 3rd to be out instanter and 20 copies ordered from Melbourne!—so he must begin to respect me. It is time, I think, after this to shut up.—Yours and his and the rest's ever,  
J. B.

This, the last letter, is dated 13th April. On May 5 Dr. Brown had spent the morning as usual, had gone a round of friends who looked for frequent visits, and in the evening, though slightly tired, he talked brightly with his son and a friend who had looked in after dinner. He was seated in his chair in the drawing-room, by his side the "eccentric table"<sup>1</sup> of early days, on which were placed, as usual, books, magazines, and the evening paper, and, as was often his habit, he occasionally read aloud some sentences from the book which interested him most at the time. When the friend rose to go, he went with her downstairs, as was his invariable habit with every guest, and at the door said and looked his usual kind good-bye. It was the last time: he never stood on that doorstep again. The next day he stayed in bed, "felt he had caught cold." The next he was no better. Pneumonia supervened; his strength gradually gave way; and early on the morning of May 11 he died. His body rests in the New Calton Cemetery beside those of his father, his wife, and his infant daughter. On the stone is recorded his father's "hope of a blessed immortality"—a hope which was meekly shared by his son.

In the Preface to the First Edition of *Horæ Subsecivæ* Dr. Brown tells of his sorrow that his father had not lived to see the completion of the book, and mentions that it was at his request that the quotation at the end of the paper on "Arthur Hallam" was placed there. The same words may fittingly close this record of his own life. "O man greatly beloved, go thou thy way till the end: for thou shalt rest, and stand in thy lot at the end of the days."

<sup>1</sup> See Letter XXVI.



Letters to Dr. John Brown  
from  
John Ruskin, W. M. Thackeray,  
and Others



# Letters from John Ruskin to Dr. Brown

In *Præterita*, Vol. II., page 423, Mr. Ruskin writes: "But the dearness of Wallington<sup>1</sup> was founded, as years went on, more deeply in its having made known to me the best and truest friend of all my life; *best* for me, because he was of my father's race and native town; *truest*, because he knew always how to help us both, and never made any mistakes in doing so—Dr. John Brown. He was staying at Wallington when I stopped there on my way to give my Edinburgh Lectures; and we walked together, with little Connie, on the moors; it dawned on me, so, gradually, what manner of man he was.

"This, the reader capable of learning at all—(there are few now who can understand a good Scotchman of the old Classic breed)—had better learn, straightway, from the record he gave of his own father's Life."

The following letters are a selection from a large number written by Mr. Ruskin to Dr. Brown, extending over a period of thirty-five years.

## I

PISA, June 27th, 1846.

MY DEAR SIR—I should have answered your very kind letter before, had I not unfortunately been for a week or two out of the way of receiving letters at all, so that the time between your writing and my receiving was longer than it should have been. I need not say that I am grateful to you for expressing your feelings to me, and that the support of such

<sup>1</sup> The residence of Sir Walter and Lady Trevelyan.



## Letters from John Ruskin [1846

assurances of sympathy is in every way precious. You appear to feel at present perhaps a little too enthusiastically; as I suppose is generally the case with our first reception of that for which we are prepared by previous tendencies of feeling in the same direction. . . . I have to thank you for your invitation to Edinburgh; it is not impossible I may have the pleasure of seeing you there at no very far-off day, but it will be admiration and not curiosity that brings me there, for many of my very earliest memories are connected with the old city, though more of them with the country north of the Forth, I having been half bred at Perth, and having some impressions of the Grampians and the Tay in consequence, which even your friend Mr. Hill, in his pretty vignette to Scott's *Fair Maid*, has very sufficiently failed of realising. It is not his fault, I suppose, he could not paint all the stones that I used to build piers with in the clear water.

One thing I was glad to see, or rather to conjecture, from your note, that your Father, whom I suppose a *Presbyterian* clergyman, had not been alarmed by the frequent expressions of admiration for Romanist works of art. These might have given rise to some dangerous surmises, considering the late melancholy schisms in the quarter from which they come, and I fear may in some respects diminish with certain classes of readers the usefulness of the book. I am the more anxious on this head, because I have not yet been able to come to any steady opinion respecting the real operation of art as directed to religious subjects on the minds of the common people; in landscape I have no doubt whatsoever, and it was therefore to landscape that I chiefly referred at the close of the 15th Chapter; neither have I any doubt of the effect of religious art, even of that which is much infected with Romanism, upon the minds of thoughtful and charitable persons who will receive the good of it as it was meant, but whether it had not been better for Italy on the whole that none had ever existed, or how far we may hope for good from a revival of a purified form of it I dare not say; it is a subject requiring attentive examination before writing anything farther respecting such art; and unfortunately it is almost impossible to carry on an investigation of the kind without spending more time abroad than I can spare. Respecting church decoration, I have spoken more boldly, my mind being more made up. I do not think it of much importance in itself; nay, I think that if much importance were ever attached to it by us, so as to leave it to be at all inferred that a church was less a church

without it than with it, instant and great evil would follow. But I think the feeling in us is of importance, which, of the two, would rather decorate and delight in decorating the church than our own houses, and would endeavour to manifest in buildings dedicated to God's service the highest qualities of intelligence and feeling with which He has gifted us.

I shall probably find some topic for a longer letter in your papers when they arrive; meantime, I wish you would let me know why, of all things in the world, you should differ with me upon railroads; I am quite at a loss to conjecture what can be said in their defence. Granting that their effect on natural scenery is trivial, that their interference with the rest and character of rural life is of no moment, and that sometimes the power of rapid locomotion may be of much service to us or save us from some bitter pain or accident which our absence at the moment must have involved, yet the general effect of them is to render all the time that we pass in locomotion the same, except in feverishness, as that passed at home, and to enable us to get over ground which formerly conveyed to us a thousand various ideas, and the examination of which was fertile in lessons of the most interesting kind, while we read a page of the morning paper. One traveller is now the same as another: it matters not whether you have eyes or are asleep or blind, intelligent or dull, all that you can know, at best, of the country you pass is its geological structure and general clothing; your study of humanity is limited to stokers and policemen at the stations, and of animal life to the various arrangements of black and brown dots on chessboard-looking fields. I can safely say that my only profitable travelling has been on foot, and that I think it admits of much doubt whether not only railroads but even carriages and horses, except for rich people or conveyance of letters and merchandise, be not inventions of the Evil one. How much of the indolence, ill-health, discomfort, thoughtlessness, selfishness, sin, and misery of this life do you suppose may be ultimately referable altogether to the invention of those two articles alone, the *carriage* and the *bridle*? I am not jesting. Think of it and tell me, believing me always very gratefully yours,

THE AUTHOR OF "MODERN PAINTERS."

# Letters from John Ruskin [1847]

## II

DENMARK HILL, 11th Feb. [1847].

MY DEAR SIR—I was much grieved this evening by receiving your letter written under circumstances of illness and fatigue, and expressing feelings so unnecessarily, unwarrantably painful, and more that my delay in thanking you for your paper in the *North British*<sup>1</sup> had left you so long in this state of anxiety. I hope you will not give the subject one thought more, except so far as it may be a source of pleasure to you to know that you have infinitely delighted an old and tender-hearted friend of mine, who could never forget the critique in *Blackwood*, and who certainly would have shrunk like a sea-anemone at shadow had any part of the present one been unkind or unjust. I do not think there is one whit more fault-finding than is fully and fairly warrantable, certainly no more than is *expedient*, for I fear that if your kind spirit of praise had thoroughly pervaded the article there had been much chance of all being set down as the work of my friends and private abettors, and much of the credit it will now carry refused in consequence. Nevertheless, for my own part, I *was* glad to hear *you* had not written the passages in question, for, though preparing to consider them and benefit by them as I best might, I was a little aghast at the request that I would never be eloquent any more; for I do think that some things cannot be said except passionately and figuratively, and my own tendencies at present are so entirely prosaic, and such delight as I once had in, or power over, the fancy so fast evaporating or freezing, or sinking, as Wordsworth has it, from the *fountain* into the “*comfortless and hidden well*,” that it pains me to be thrust away from the last hold that I had, or thought I had, upon the *altar*, and ordered into the ice-house of mere philosophy, there to be kept cool and dry. Yet I am not sure but your friend is right, altogether right, and I *am* sure that your feelings of pleasure, not to say your expressions, are overcharged—I mean in your letters to me—expressions which could be warranted only by the elaborate work of an aged man. There is nothing in the book which is not less than I ought to have done, considering the singular advantages I have had, and I am either a very stupid, or at least very *slow*

<sup>1</sup> Article on “Modern Painters,” *North British Review*, Feb. 1847.

person, or else the multiplication of opportunity has a tendency to deaden both energy and imagination, for I am always busy, and yet with no effect proportioned to the time, or coequal with the results which I see obtained in every direction around me by my inferiors in age, leisure, education, and opportunity. Alas, it will be long before you have any third volume. . . .

## III

DENMARK HILL, 9th February [1848].

MY DEAR DR. BROWN—I owe you my best thanks for your most interesting review;<sup>1</sup> it is delightful as a memoir of such a man, and equally so as a piece of very beautiful thought, and very perfect writing. I do not recollect anything that has given me greater pleasure than the account of the Doctor's Sisyphean labours and ratiocinations on the Pentlands, or than the very beautiful comparison of Genius, talent, and information with the three several streams; but it is *all* valuable. The worst of it was, that after all that we hear of your noble old friend's Thunder and Lightning, one is—at least I was—a little disappointed by the quietness and sobriety of the extracts from the Scripture readings. Is it at all possible to get a Calotype of him? I suppose it must be now. There is certainly nothing like them for rendering of Intellect, nor to my taste for everything else, except beauty.

I liked the passage very much about self-forgetfulness, but how is this virtue to be gained? Happy those whose sympathies stretch them out like gold leaf until their very substance is lost. But there are others—not unprincipled men—who yet cannot make themselves to themselves transparent nor imponderable. They overbalance and block out everything with their own *near* selves. . . .

## IV

LAUSANNE, 6th Aug. '60.

DEAR DR. BROWN—Many and many a time have I been thinking of you and wishing to write to you, but pens drop from my fingers when I take them up now. However, I must just send this line to thank you first for your note about fifth

<sup>1</sup> Dr. Brown's article on the Rev. Dr. Chalmers' Works in *North British Review*, Feb. 1848.

## Letters from John Ruskin [1860

volume, and then for your enclosure of Manchester merchant to my father, which is very touching and interesting, and also for all your good interest and care for me, even though it alarm you sharply at some of my vagaries. You will perhaps like the *Political Economy* better as it goes on; <sup>1</sup> meantime, you must remember that having passed all my life in pretty close connection with the mercantile world, and hearing these subjects often discussed by men of business at my father's table, I am likely to know pretty well what I am about, even in this out-of-the-way subject, as it seems; so you must just wait patiently to see the end of it. I find it rather refreshing to do a little bit of hard thinking sometimes; even here among the hills it is very dull work to be quite idle, and I don't know what would become of me if I had to amuse myself all day long. I am forced to try to do so, being more tired out than the bulk of that last volume would apparently justify, but not half the work I did is in it. I cut away half of what I had written as I threw it into final form, thinking the book would be too big; and half, or nearly half of the drawings were left unpublished, the engravers not having time to do them. There are only three etchings of mine in the book, but I *did* seven, of which one was spoiled in biting, three in mezzotinting, so that I was very fairly knocked up when I got the last sheet corrected. I have since been chiefly in the valley of Chamouni drawing Alpine Roses, or rather Alpine Rose-leaves, with little result but mortification. Chamouni itself and all the rest of Switzerland are completely spoiled by railroads, huge hotels, and architects out of employ, who persuade the Town Councils to let them knock down the old town walls for the sake of the job. . . .

The annexation of Savoy to France will be an immense benefit to Savoy. Already some stir is being made in the cretinous torpor of the country, and French Engineers are surveying the Arve banks. The river has flowed just where it chose these thousand years, on one side of the valley to-day, and on the other to-morrow. A few millions of francs judiciously spent will gain to Savoy as many millions of acres of fruitfulest land and healthy air instead of miasma. . . .

<sup>1</sup> The first of Ruskin's papers, "Unto this Last," appeared in *Cornhill* for August 1860.

## V

11th November 1860.

DEAR DR. BROWN—I have your kind letter and am thankful at least to hear that Mrs. Brown's health is no worse, and most happy to hear of the new book, which now that I have for the most part done my own troublous businesses, I shall have time to read and enjoy. I am glad you like the last paper better, and shall be gladder still when you perceive this main fact concerning me and my work that all those descriptions and sentimentalisms are of an entirely second-rate and vulgar kind, quite and for ever inferior to either Tennyson, Browning, Lowell, or any other. . . . The value of these papers on economy is in their having for the first time since money was set up for the English Dagon, declared that there never was nor will be any vitality nor Godship in him, and that the value of your ship of the line is by no means according to the price you have given for your guns, but to the price you have given for your Captain. For the first time, I say, this is declared in purely accurate scientific terms; Carlyle having led the way, as he does in all noble insight in this generation. . . . Remember me affectionately to Noel Paton.

## VI

[Novr. 1861.]

DEAR DR. BROWN—I am so much obliged to you for that beautiful book about your father. I like it better than anything I ever read about religious people. The story about the old woman's "He'll lose more than I'll do" is the most exquisite instance of the way strength and pathos and humour may join I ever heard of human creature.<sup>1</sup> The Rabbit story is *delicious*.—Ever affectionately yours, J. R.

## VII

LUCERNE, 3rd December '61.

MY DEAR DR. BROWN—I have been this last year somewhat seriously ill, though no one knows it but myself. I am now better, but nothing else than illness could have prevented my telling you of the great admiration, and what, if pleasure had been possible to me, would have been pleasure,

<sup>1</sup> See "Letter to John Cairns, D.D.," *Horæ Subsecivæ*, 2nd Series, p. 70.

## Letters from John Ruskin [1861

in and with which I looked over your *Horæ*. It is very noble writing and feeling and thinking, and will help and heal and cheer, in all ways, among all people. To me, at the time, the most available part was that dedicated to poor dear old Sulky Peter,<sup>1</sup> monumentum aere, etc.; but I will read all carefully when I get home.

It *was* actually pleasure to me to see in your note to my father that you were busy in your profession. I have been reading to-day the account of the successful trial of the metal plates of the *Warrior*. Has progress as definite yet been made in human Defences against Death, or worse than death—decrepitude? I cannot fancy any study or work in this age so noble as that of a physician.

I don't know to whom I wrote, but it was not to you, some word of an impression made on me by part of the *Horæ*. Did it never strike you what a marvellous, what a frightful fact it was that the tenets of a sect should prevent a great, good, and loving man from knowing that there was Humanity out of and apart from that sect, until he was lifted by strangers from a snow-drift into which he had sunk in his old age?<sup>2</sup> You say you have heard of me from Lady Trevelyan—that I am busy and well. I suppose she knows. But I have been busier and better, and hope to be so again.

I am seriously annoyed by my father's sending you those effete and vile verses of mine, in which the good which they do me by humiliation is neutralised by the unhealthiness of the discouragement and disgust which seize me whenever I see or hear of them.

### VIII

[1861.]

DEAR DR. BROWN—I return the book<sup>3</sup> so quickly that at first you may think I haven't read it, but I have, though not to my mother. Both she and I are somewhat melancholy people, never in the common sense of the word "low" or "out of spirits," but never "high," and not easily recovering spring after depression. You, with wife and children and friends, can easily witness, not without noble compassion, but without more than passing sorrow, what I, having no such sources of happiness springing beside me day by day, cannot even read of without a dead loss of energy and health from

<sup>1</sup> The paper on "Our Dogs" was dedicated to Sir Walter and Lady Trevelyan's glum and faithful Peter.

<sup>2</sup> "Letter to John Cairns, D.D.," page 74.

<sup>3</sup> *Rab.*

which I don't recover for a week. I *never* read sad stories, "not if I know it," and you have written this one much too well and forcibly to admit of my reading it twice. But touching the illustrations there can be no doubt, I think,—line engraving or woodcut, nothing that ends in "graph" of any sort whatsoever. The best woodcutting of the day is better than line engraving in general; to be good, line engraving must be very costly. I should like costly line engraving best, but I doubt the courage of any publisher to pay boldly enough, and cheap line engraving is the worst of all things, worse even than the graphs.<sup>1</sup>

The tale is beautifully written and will do good. But to me it has only done this much of harm,—given me one more melancholy association, like a real one, with the Pentlands.

## IX

DENMARK HILL, 16th January '62.

DEAR DR. BROWN—There's no use in telling you these lay sermons<sup>2</sup> are delicious, for everybody will be telling you as much, but you may be glad to know, at least, that I'm getting the good of them. And partly the Bad of them, for all such wise and good sayings make me very selfishly sorrowful, because I had them not said to me thirty years ago. All good and knowledge seems to come to me now

As unto dying eyes

The casement slowly grows a glimmering square.<sup>3</sup>

But you yourself, I remember, were despondent about yourself when you went (to Spain was it not?), and now you're able to write these jolly things and preach them too!

Am I not in a curiously *unnatural* state of mind in this way—that at 43, instead of being able to settle to my middle-aged life like a middle-aged creature, I have more instincts of youth about me than when I was young, and am miserable because I cannot climb, run, or wrestle, sing, or flirt—as I was when a youngster because I couldn't sit writing metaphysics all day long. Wrong at both ends of life. . . .

<sup>1</sup> The illustrated edition of *Rab* was published in 1862.

<sup>2</sup> "Plain Words on Health," *Horæ Subsecivæ*, 1st Series.

<sup>3</sup> Tennyson's *Princess*, Part IV.



# Letters from John Ruskin [1862

## X

[1862.]

DEAR DR. BROWN—Yes, indeed, I shall always regard you as one of the truest, fondest, faithfulest friends I have. It was precisely because I did and do so that your letters made me so despondent. “If Dr Brown thinks this of me, if *he* supposes that my strong, earnest words on a subject of this mighty import are worth no more than the Editor of the *Scotsman’s* or (who is it?—Mr. Heugh’s?), and that they can be seen to the bottom of in a day’s reading, what must others think of me?” You say I have effected more revolution than other writers. My dear Doctor, I have been useful, in various accidental minor ways, by pretty language and pleasant hints, chiefly to girls (I don’t despise girls, I love them, and they help me, and understand me often better than grown women), but of my intended work I have done nothing. I have not yet made people understand so much as my first principle that in art there is a Right and Wrong.

At this instant nineteen thousand Turner sketches are packed in tin cases without one human being in Europe caring what happens to them. Why, again, should you suppose that I would be unjust in any such serious work as this,<sup>1</sup> if I could help it? Those expressions of mine may do me harm, or do me good; what is that to me? They are the only true, right, or possible expressions. The Science of Political Economy *is* a Lie,—wholly and to the very root (as hitherto taught). It is also the Damnedest, that is to say, the most Utterly and to the Lowest Pit condemned of God and His Angels, that the Devil, or Betrayer of Men, has yet invented, except his (the Devil’s) theory of Sanctification. To this “science” and to this alone (the Professed and organised pursuit of Money) is owing *All* the Evil of modern days. I say All. The Monastic Theory is at an end. It is now the Money theory which corrupts the church, corrupts the household life, destroys honour, beauty, and life throughout the universe. It is *the* Death incarnate of Modernism, and the so-called science of its pursuit is the most cretinous, speechless, paralysing plague that has yet touched the brains of mankind.

There is no “state of mind” indicated in my saying this. I write it as the cool, resolute result of ten years thought

<sup>1</sup> Ruskin’s *Cornhill* papers.

and sight. I write it as coolly as I should a statement respecting the square of the hypothenuse. If my hand shakes, it is from mere general nervousness, vexation about my mother (who, however, is going on quite well as far as the accident admits), and so on. The matter of this letter is as deliberate as if I were stating an equation to you, or a chemical analysis. You say I should "go and be cheerful." I don't know what your Edinburgh streets afford of recreative sight. Our London ones afford not much. My only way of being cheerful is precisely the way I said, to shut myself up and look at weeds and stones; for as soon as I see or hear what human creatures are suffering of pain, and saying of absurdity, I get about as cheerful as I should be in a sheep-fold strewn hurdle-deep with bloody carcases, with a herd of wolves and monkeys howling and gibbering on the top of them. I am resting now from all real work and reading mineralogy and such things, amusing myself as I can, and hope to get rid of nervousness and so on in good time, and then have it well out with these economical fellows.

It puzzles me not a little that you should not *yet* see the drift of my first statement in those *Cornhill* papers. I say there is *no* science of Political Economy yet, because no one has defined wealth. They don't know what they are talking about. They don't even know what Money is, but tacitly assume that Money is desirable,—as a sign of wealth, without defining Wealth itself. Try to define Wealth yourself, and you will soon begin to feel where the bottom fails.

## XI

*Monday morning* [1862].

Sunshine at last, looking as if it would stay, puts me into some little heart again. Among many subjects of discouragement lately, I am not sure that any told upon me, among personal matters, more than my amazement at finding out how little you knew of me. That, after all the work I had done, and the kind of quiet labour with which I had brought to bear the elements of various sciences on my own apparently unscientific subject, you should think I did not know the look of a science when I saw one, or that I would blurt out an assertion on a matter affecting the interests of every living creature in the world, which could be overthrown by an article in the *Scotsman*. Nothing perhaps has ever shown me how futile my work has really been hitherto, and

## Letters from John Ruskin [1862]

how necessary it was to set about it in another way. For this "science" of political economy, it is perhaps not quite the damndest lie the Devil has yet invented, because it does not wear so smooth a face as his monasticisms and sanctifications did, but it is at all events the broadest and most effective lie, and the most stupefying. Nothing in literature or in human work of any sort is so contemptible, considering the kind of person (well educated, well meaning, and so on, from whom it proceeds), as the writings of political economists. In no other imaginary science did its disciples ever start without knowing what they were going to talk about, that is to say, to talk about "necessaries and conveniences" (*vide* first sentences of Adam Smith) without having defined what was Necessary or Convenient. Ricardo's chapter on Rent and Adam Smith's 8th chapter on the wages of labour stand, to my mind, quite Sky High among the monuments of Human Brutification; that is to say, of the paralysis of human intellect fed habitually on Grass, instead of Bread of God. They are two of quite the most wonderful Phenomena in the world, and the tone of mind which produces such, together with Cretinism, Cholera, and other inexplicabilities of human disease, will furnish people, one day, with notable results for *real* scientific analysis.

### XII

[Probably 1864.]

MY DEAR DR. BROWN—It is very happy for me to think I have been able to do you any good. I never speak of your sorrow.<sup>1</sup> I have no comfort for any one in sorrow, nor for myself. And remember that whatever distress may come on us through our once happily fixed and satisfied affection, there is a more evil-doing sorrow in the desolateness which has never known what it was to have love answered, or even to have love for an instant at rest,—which has known nothing *but* suffering ever to come of affection one way or another.

Now, at this time, there are one or two people whom I care for and can never see, and many who care for me and cannot see me. . . . And this is only part of the way of fate in this wonderful wilderness of a world, which the happy people say is all happy, and the good people say is all right,

<sup>1</sup> Dr. Brown's wife died 6th January 1864.

1864]

to Dr. Brown

and then they go and make it more miserable for others, and more wrong for others, and say they are serving God. . . .

### XIII

[July 1870.]

My feeling in trouble and anguish always is of *more* faith than under happiness, and I think I may almost say the same, paradoxical as it is, even of the anguish of doubt. The least doubt generally presses home upon me the words, "Though He slay me, yet will I trust in Him." Doubt always seems to me a sort of trial put upon us by God, and this even when it is *doubt of God Himself*. I never *can* get beyond praying to God to take away my doubt of Him, which seems to me to prove that there is, without our knowing it, a substance of faith underlying the doubt. Suicide in a case like Prévost-Paradol's—assuming he was in his right mind—seems to me to be consistent only with a *knowledge* that we have no God, a state of mind I cannot conceive, and utterly distinct from any sort of doubt I have ever experienced. Indeed, the more I suffer from doubt, the deeper becomes the feeling that this suffering is of His giving who could remove it.

I was very much touched by the Passion-play and wrote some very bad verses at Ammergau, which I send you only as a proof how chronically different from the state of mind you suppose my actual state of mind is. Pray don't show them again, and destroy them when you have read them.

### XIV

Christmas, 1873.

DEAR DR. BROWN—I came home this evening from the fireside of a happy and gentle English family, happier myself than of late it has often chanced me to be; and read quietly in the evening alone for the twentieth time or so your story of "Her Last Half-Crown,"<sup>1</sup> and the tale of the Shepherd's dog, the "wee fell ane,"<sup>2</sup> and I am very grateful to you for these gleams of the Spirit world. Write me a little line soon, please. I want to know that you are well. It is long now since I've had a word. I keep fairly up to my work, but I can't write to my old friends as I want to; I should have so

<sup>1</sup> *Horæ Subsæciivæ*, 2nd Series, p. 165.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* p. 194.

## Letters from John Ruskin [1873]

much to say, for there are no days now without repentance for me, of some neglect of what I possessed of best in days of old.—Ever your affectionate,  
J. RUSKIN.

### XV<sup>1</sup>

ARTHUR SEVERN'S, HERNE HILL, LONDON, S. E.  
[29th Decr. 1873].

DEAREST DR. BROWN—Your letters are so helpful to me, you can't think, for I am more alone now in the gist of me than ever, only Carlyle and you with me in sympathy; . . . and all that I had of precious<sup>est</sup> utterly gone—mother, nurse, and just afterwards, in a very terrible way, what I thought I should never have lost. Then this battle with the dragon is far more close and fearful than I conceived. Turner only knew quite what it was. I *am* going to etch the Python as well as the Hesperid dragon, God willing; but I'm afraid about my heart a little; it beats quicker and irregularly; the chronic state of rage and grief tells on me slowly, and the never getting any peace out of sky or leaf, or anything, and with a disposition to live just such a "methodic" life as Raeburn's, the perpetual disturbance, hurry, and trying to do what I can't.

This Raeburn memoir is most precious. You are entirely right in almost all except that about drawing "in love."<sup>2</sup> One must paint or write truthfully, from a loving heart. But one must not lie in love, nor even conceal truth that *can* be told. Some truth cannot; there are things one must not say because they would not be understood. . . . I don't think Raeburn ever *flattered*. Drew the essence of the man, whether *he* liked it or not. . . .

The four last lectures on engraving ought to have been out long ago, but press correction plagues me more than anything I have to do. PLEASE write as often as you can.—Ever your loving,  
J. R.

After finishing this I re-read yours. I had pounced, in a selfish way, on my part of it. I now read with the most positive power and will of contradiction your saying that the Raeburn Life is the product of a shattered brain. You are still in full possession of the most sweet and splendid faculties,

<sup>1</sup> See Dr. Brown's Letter, No. CCXLI.

<sup>2</sup> *Horæ Subsecivæ*, 3rd Series, page 417.

and if you don't overstrain them in kindness, will keep them to the end. Don't write *a word* that tires you, to me, or anybody. . . .

XVI<sup>1</sup>

ROME, 23rd May [1874].

DEAREST DR. BROWN—I have your kind note with that quite exquisite description of Susie<sup>2</sup> in it. Never was anything so softly true,—a Holbein portrait with Carpaccio's tenderness. I am so very very glad you had a photograph of that picture.<sup>3</sup> I am getting Botticelli's "Zipporah" well enough to give you some idea of *her* too. She's as pure as the other, but altogether a different sort of girl, and has fallen quite irrecoverably in love with Moses at first sight. It is curious that the hem of her robe is an embroidery of golden letters on a blue ground, the letters being all a lovely writing peculiar to Botticelli and Mantegna (so at least says my good and shrewd assistant, Mr. Murray), and we can't hear of anybody who can read them. I fancy they have usually been thought merely grotesque ornament, but I have no doubt they are letters. . . .

I wonder what Dora Wordsworth's *Journal* is that it is to set me on fire. I am very nearly burnt out, and scarcely show a flash, even on extreme delight of provocation. . . .

## XVII

ASSISI, 14th June 1874.

DEAREST DR. BROWN—. . . I'm writing most of my work here in the Sacristan's cell in the monastery. . . . I've got to find out here how much is Giotto's work and how much restorers' and pupils'; restoration is easily caught on, but the pupils are the deuce and all. He sketches a bit for them, lets them do all they can, then mends a little, and puts in a head of his own, and it's enough to drive one crazy. And then he's so confoundedly personal to me. One of the things I want to do myself is his Lady Poverty, and she has her head in a thicket of pale red and deep red roses; and just on the wall next her there's "Penitence" driving away Love,—and Death,—at least AMOR and MORS. Giotto

<sup>1</sup> See Dr. Brown's Letter, No. CCXLVIII.

<sup>2</sup> Susanna Beever, of The Thwaite, Coniston, author of "Shakespeare Handbook," etc. See *Hortus Inclusus*.

<sup>3</sup> "St. Ursula."

## Letters from John Ruskin [1874]

always puts KARITAS for real Love. *She* stands beside Poverty as she is being married and gives her (the antiquaries say) "an apple." It is a heart; but I believe I'm the first person except the plasterers who has ever been up to look at it. St. Francis disappoints me dreadfully in his face, but puts the ring on like a lover.

Susie says she thinks you are sad. Please don't be. That's what my friends say to me too, and I sometimes snarl in return. But there *is* a certain power in us, isn't there, of "please don't be"?—Ever your loving,  
J. R.

I've read such a lot of French novels since I came abroad, I feel as if I'd been living in Paris. I've got a curious and very useful result,—the enormous importance of Revenge in the modern French mind as an element of pleasure and heroism; and I'm going to take this up to compare with Scott's feudal ancestors, and then show how exquisitely *he* has refused it as an element of interest in story (except in one comparatively weak story, *Peveril*), and changed the Feudal law into "Vengeance is Mine."

Ever, and of course twice over in one letter, your loving,  
J. R.

### XVIII

ASSISI, 25th June [1874].

MY DEAREST DR. BROWN— . . . I have been made, for life, somewhat uncharitable towards scientific men by a wretched oculist who made all London believe that Turner's last style was only the result of a form of jaundice. Boo-hoo, said London and the Royal Institution; here we have it at last—we always said there was nothing in Turner,—now you see!!

Another quite conclusive thing to me was Faraday's attitude about Spiritualism. First, that a man professing Christianity should deny spiritual power, and necromancy as one ghastly form of it; secondly, that a man professing philosophy should be unable to distinguish the evidence of nervous persons from that of healthy ones; lastly, that any man of feeling or education should be able to cast aside the entire faith and tradition of the previous world, and never so much as wonder what was to come next.

I wish you had seen my Sacristan's eyes flashing with joy and faith to-day as he was describing, as fast as his tongue could move, the way in which good Christians used to be able

## Letters from John Ruskin [1874

did not ask your sister too. This was pure inadvertence and stupidity. My life has been ruined by stupidity; I am a dolt, a cretin, a log, a dead mole, a stuffed hedgehog, a fossil echinus, not to have thought of it. *Come both* directly. I am convinced by your own last note, Brantwood's the only place for you.—Ever your loving,  
J. R.

### XXI

SIMPLON INN, *My Mother's Birthday, 2d September '76.*

DEAREST DOCTOR—You would have a longer note than this, but that I am finishing with great care a little bit for 4th *Deucalion*, which *must* be written in this room, giving account of the evening spent in the next one to it (whence at this moment the voices of the diligence people at breakfast clatter loudly with their knives and forks through the ill-closed door) thirty-two years ago by my father and mother and me, with James Forbes, such account prefacing a needful critique of Master Viollet-le-Duc on le Massif du Mont Blanc!!!

At last my enemy *has* written a book! . . .

Well, next about myself. I'm a good deal shocked at finding how my old limbs fail me, on the rocks they used to love, and I'm greatly vexed to find the high Alpine air more directly provoking bilious headache than ever, so that even where I *can* climb to, I've no comfort. But I had a wonderful study yesterday of the moraines of the Simplon Glaciers, and of stomachic as distinguished from real despondency; it is very curious that the stomachic despondency is often intensely *sublime*! giving a wild, lurid, fever-struck grandeur to grand things, which, thank God, to-day I shall see none of, for I put myself on chicken and dry toast, and am all right again for the ravine of Gondo, which I'm just starting to walk down. . . .

### XXII<sup>1</sup>

BRANTWOOD, CONISTON, LANCASHIRE [October 1877].

. . . Your letter is *such* a delight to me. You are evidently so well and so strong—reading novels at that rate! but what a cormorant!

There's some more Scott in next *Fors* planned, and I

<sup>1</sup> See Dr. Brown's Letter, No. CCLXXXV.



must get it soon in print, as I want to touch up well for Christmas. It has come well into my head, and will be the best of the longest *Fors* there has been, but I hope, liked. It's still on music, but brings in poetry and *Marmion*, then on the Lydian measures, Sardis, Cræsus, and the II. Apocalypse<sup>1</sup> as addressed to the great group of the Lydian churches. I've got to draw a map of them with Tmolus and Pactolus, and if I don't go in at the Nicolaitanes!

Then it's so lovely working out the correspondence in each case, of the Attribute with the Threat and Promise. The "that shutteth and no man openeth" with the "thou shalt go out no more,"<sup>2</sup> etc. . . .

## XXIII\*

BRANTWOOD, CONISTON, LANCASHIRE, 21st October '78.

. . . It is so delicious to me that you enjoy those Turners, and my old things so much. I don't recollect what the "Calais" is, but you are utterly and infinitely welcome to it, whatever it is, and to Turner's dog too. It ought to be yours of all people in this world; so please put them both up in any corners there are to spare in the pretty rooms; and for the rest, keep them at present with you, if they're not too troublesome.

Yes, I was at Hawarden last week (three days of it), but I *cannot* now go into society. People are perpetually trying to discuss things with me of which I know the bottom and all round, and have *told* them the bottom and all round twenty years ago; and the deadly feeling of the resilience and immortality of the undintable caoutchouc of which most people's heads are made is too much for me.

The Duke of Argyll was there too, and I couldn't say half I wanted to Mr. Gladstone, because one had to be civil to the Ducality (the more as it was in mourning). My refuge was always Mary Gladstone, who is a very "perfect woman, nobly planned." Papa and Mamma, and the Duke, and everybody went away on the Tuesday, and left Mary to take care of me all Wednesday, and she did, and I was very sorry to come away.

All the same, I'm glad to be at home again, but have

<sup>1</sup> Second chapter of the Book of Revelation.

<sup>2</sup> Rev. chap. iii. vv. 7, 12.

<sup>3</sup> See Dr. Brown's Letters, Nos. CCXCI. and CCXCII.

—s from John Ruskin [1878

lips. Well, about that blessed Bank,<sup>1</sup>  
to understand a little, then, are they? . . .

## XXIV

BRANTWOOD, CONISTON, LANCASHIRE, 11th May '79.

DEAREST DOCTOR—I was on the very “jump-off” of a letter to you to say I had got back to Scott again, at last, which I thought would please you. Only I shall have sad things to say of him, more than perhaps you think, concerning the waste and the cutting short of his days, by the double sin of writing for money and for mob. My “Alas” comes so often in the margin, that I shall have to shorthand it into A for alas, as I had already D for Damn, whenever the names of Terry or Ballantyne blot the page.

Never waste your time on people who want their pictures looked at to see if they're genuine. They never are, and any dealer will tell them so for a guinea.—Ever your loving . . .

## XXV

BRANTWOOD, CONISTON, LANCASHIRE, 22d June [1879].

. . . I heard yesterday from Susie that you were a little depressed, and that she thought a letter from me would do you good! Well, I *can* write more cheerful letters, perhaps, than once upon a time, and I really hope it may please you a little to know how often I am thinking of you, and how the idea of *your* liking anything I may do helps me in the languid times, when one says to oneself, or feels, without coming to the point of utterance, that it is of no use to do or say anything more.

I think one of my best mythological discoveries was that the Sirens were not pleasures, but *desires*, and part of the cheerfulness in which I am now able to live is in the accomplishment of that word upon me, *Desire* shall fail, because “man goeth to his long home.” The taking away from me of all feverish hope, and the ceasing of all feverish effort, leaves me to enjoy, at least without grave drawback or disturbance, the Veronica blue, instead of the Forget-me-not, and above all, the investigation of any pretty natural problem, the ways of a wave, or the strength of a stem. With the

<sup>1</sup> The City of Glasgow Bank, which failed in 1878.

persons whom I most loved, joy in the *beauty* of nature is virtually dead in me, but I can still interest myself in her doings.

I've just finished colouring a section of Cumberland rocks, for pattern to the hand-colourer, of the last plate in 1st Vol. *Deucalion*, and hope soon to send you a copy. Also, I am well into my Scott work again, and do earnestly hope to send you something to read before the Summer's over. Meantime, keep happy, and let us both look for the happy hunting-ground where we shall meet all our—dogs again. A darling little hairy terrier who got kicked and killed by a clumsy horse the other day because he was too good for this world, will certainly get between St. Peter's legs as he lets me in. . . .

## XXVI

BRANTWOOD, CONISTON, LANCASHIRE, 1st July '79.

. . . How lovely of you to write to me when you were so sad, and how very naughty of you to say "good-bye" at the end of the letter. . . .

One thing I want to say to you very specially,—playing "Doctor" myself! I am sure it is very bad for you to read stupid and flimsy modern books. I think, of all devils, the *Rubbish* devil is in these days the most dangerous. . . . You should never read anything but the noblest books—or the simplest.

You ask me about this new *Odyssey*. Now you have no business with new *Odysseys*. Old Chapman is entirely insuperable, another *Homer*—or, for us English and Scotch, *better* than *Homer*—an entirely blessed and mighty creature of our own. Here are four lines at random opening for you:

The Cheerful Ladie of the Light, deckt in her saffron robe,  
Disperst her beams through every part of this *enflowed* globe—  
When thundering Jove a court of Gods assembled by his will,  
In top of all the topmost heights that crown the Olympian Hill.

I send you the old book itself; it may revive you to bathe in it, like the Dysart sea.—Ever your lovingest, J. R.

I don't know if there's an honest modern edition. If you Edinburgh people cared for a real Temple of the Greek Spirit, on your Calton, you would republish it letter for letter, and make a modern Argos of yourselves. Homer was

## Letters from John Ruskin [1879]

an Achaian, not an Ionian. Gladstone has shown *that*, and I forgive him all the rest of his existence for it.

The Scott's Life *will* be separate now. *Fors* is wound up on her own authority. You see that sentence about Jael's nail was the real finish.

### XXVII

BRANTWOOD, CONISTON, LANCASHIRE [1879].

. . . You shan't make *any* drawbacks to the *Heart of Midlothian*, or I won't be sweet-blooded! "All but the end" indeed!!! Suppose I were to say all but the beginning, which would be more to the purpose? The long Porteous mob business is a duller thing than the beginning of *Waverley*. But that dark first background and the ghastly close are all essential, only it was Heaven and Nature did it for him, not *He*. Scott, who was exactly like Turner, inspired *quite* rightly only when quite passive. I've just been reading the *Pirate* again. THERE is a Farrago of ugly stuff for you at the end indeed, very difficult to analyse,—like Turner's bad work. But the end of the *Heart*! What could have ended it otherwise? Should Staunton's son have had an attaché's place like Cunningham Falconer? Do you know *Patronage*? There's good and refreshing reading in it.—Ever your lovingest,  
J. R.

I've got cranberry blossom all aglow on my moorland. It and *Anagallis tenella*! and milkwort! (*Giulietta*) and the bog-heather just budding—can you fancy all these together, mixed with rain out of rainbows?

### XXVIII

BRANTWOOD, CONISTON, LANCASHIRE, 5th June [1880].

. . . That's the very thing. I'm so glad to know of such a dictionary.

I did not answer one chief bit in your letter, "the difference to me." I cannot distinguish in myself the change caused by old age from that caused by loss. What all the lovely things round me here would have been to me had I had Father or Mother now, or what they would cease to be if I were to lose Joanie,<sup>1</sup> I cannot fancy. The only *real* sorrow is the thought of pain given long ago, the rest is loss,

<sup>1</sup> Mrs. Arthur Severn.

not pain, and even a certain gain of nobleness in bearing loss. But the difference,—yes, immeasurable.

## XXIX

BRANTWOOD, CONISTON, LANCASHIRE [1880].

. . . Tell Miss Brown, and please anybody else who remonstrates on the matter, that German isn't a "language" at all, but only a "throatage," or "gutturage"—a mode of human expression learnt chiefly of wolves and bears, with half of the things it calls words stitched in the middle like wasps and ants, or ass panniers, and letters scrabbled out when people were mostly drunk, so that they didn't know the tops from the bottoms of them.—Ever your lovingest,  
J. R.

Please, I want to know what Dattern and Thut are in the following :—

Was haben doch die Gänse gethan,  
Das so viel müsse Leben lan?  
Die Gäns mit ihrem Dattern,  
Mit ihrem Geschrei und Schnattern,  
Sanct Martin han verrathen.  
Darum thut man sie braten.<sup>1</sup>

Evelyn says that often on the doors of the houses in the streets of Brieg, a wolf's, bear's, and fox's head might be seen altogether. The throatage of modern German Metaphysicians (Fichte, etc.) is truly Geschrei and Schnattern. . . .

## XXX

BRANTWOOD, CONISTON, LANCASHIRE, 3rd Feb. '81.

. . . Your goodness in writing to Susie has given more pleasure and done more good both to her and me than even *you* have often in your long and benevolent life been able to give of your gift of healing. Susie has the blessed reverence which enables her to be proud in her pleasures, and that *you* should write to her and *I* (for it must out) go to tea to

<sup>1</sup> What have the geese done,  
That so many must lose their lives?  
The geese with their cackling,  
With their screaming and chattering,  
Have betrayed Saint Martin.  
That is why one roasts them.

## Letters from John Ruskin [1881

hear the letter, literally "sets her up" in the most innocent, practical, and medicinal significance of the Scottish phrase.

Also the treatment you prescribed has done her real and quite apparent good, and the parts about me and my books please her as if she were my nurse.

They please *me* in many and far-going ways. I had not sent you any of them, fearing that, however yet you might sympathise with me in all I am trying to get said, much of it is now repetition, and much more done imperfectly in the perpetual ebb of years, and that sometimes you might not be inclined to read anything. But, on the whole, I have thought it best to tell Allen to send you everything from me as soon as I get it out. . . . I'm getting prosy, and here's the maid for the post. All love and light and life be to you, and all whom you love,—*me*, please mayn't I say too?—Ever your grateful and loving . . .

### XXXI

BRANTWOOD, CONISTON, LANCASHIRE [6th Feby. 1881].

. . . Your letter is a delight to me even though with it comes the message of Carlyle gone. In this bright day, I trust he sees still clearer light at last.

What you say of Turner is such a joy to me. But how did you get to understand Beethoven? He always sounds to me like the upsetting of bags of nails, with here and there an also dropped hammer.

The account of Ada Dundas is very delicious too. She has been the *wisest* of all my young and stranger correspondents (in my two senses of wisdom, caring much and troubling little), and I count her among my jewel friends. You're among my precious frankincense friends. Two or three true ones I have, good in the myrrh manner also, but I don't quite like them so well.

I've just been writing a word or two to a Scotch country clergyman at Abernethy which I hope will get to your eyes somehow. They're about the *Monastery* and *Abbot*. How few Scottish youths understand that story, or consider whether Halbert going into the Army and Edward into the Church were more honourable, dutiful to their widowed mother, or serviceable to themselves, and Halbert happier with Mary than Dandie Dinmont with Ailie or Cuddie Headrigg with Jenny.—Ever your lovingest . . .

## XXXII

BRANTWOOD, CONISTON, LANCASHIRE, 29th March '81.

DEAREST DR. BROWN—Susie tells me those entirely poisonous papers have been frightening you about me. I've been wool-gathering a bit again, that's all, and have come round all right, with more handfuls of golden fleece than on my last voyage to Medea's land.

I'm a little giddy and weak yet, but was up on the hills yesterday in the sunshine and snow, teaching Joanie's three children how to cross snow on a slope. The poor little things had no nails in their fine London boots, but we got about Salisbury Crag height for all that.

The illness was much more definite in its dreaming than the last one, and not nearly so frightful. It taught me much, as these serious dreams do always; and I hope to manage myself better, and not go Argonauting any more. But *both* these illnesses have been part of one and the same system of constant thought, far out of sight to the people about me, and of course, getting more and more separated from them as *they* go on in the ways of the modern world, and *I* go *back* to live with my Father and my Mother and my Nurse, and one more,—all waiting for me in the Land of the Leal.

One of the most interesting parts of the dream to me was a piece of teaching I got about St. Benedict's nurse, while I was fancying my own had come back to me, which will be entirely useful to me in the history of St. Benedict.

Have you read the preface to the *Monastery* lately?

I had scarcely got my wits together again, when they were nearly sent adrift by my getting hold of the MS. of *St. Roman's*!

I've now got: 1, *The Black Dwarf*; 2, *Nigel*; 3, *Peveril*; 4, *Woodstock*; 5, *St. Roman's* (besides all the letters on the building of Abbotsford); pretty well for a Lancashire cottage Library.—Ever your lovingest . . .

## XXXIII

BRANTWOOD, CONISTON, LANCASHIRE, 5th August '81.

. . . I've seen Susie's note now with its wonderful saying about Shakespeare, and the Carlyle gossip. I do not look at the article. I told Froude just what you say months

## Letters from John Ruskin [1881

since,—that the world had no more to do with Carlyle's life than with his old hat. But Froude felt too deeply, and besides had promised this and that. *I* don't care an old hat's brim whether it's printed or not, nor whether the public swears or howls, or squeaks or blazes, only I don't like Froude's wasting his time on old love affairs (as if there weren't always enough on hand), and I can't waste mine on *anything* now, it's running so short. But I'll look up that letter which you say is perfect. What can you possibly mean? When a woman refuses a man she's a mere brute if she pretends to have any reason.

I send you the first proof of the end of my bird-catching for this year. It ends in Scotland, so you must see it first, else I mightn't have bored you with it *yet*, for I think some of it as tiresome as—(Shakespeare?). I've even worked through a proof, but the ending has some mint sauce, and see the Dorcas Society woman's letter!

*That weariness of reading is a totally UNEXPECTED calamity to me* also, in growing old. I can read nothing now but Scott, and *Frederick the Great*, and I begin to know them a little bit too well. My drawing does not tire me, but the focus of my best, farthest-seeing eye has altered more than that of the nearer-sighted, weaker one; and now, in small work, they begin to dispute about where the line is to go, which I am sorry for, but shall take to larger work. Suppose I do a Panorama of the Alps, with our Lady of the Snow crowning our blessed old Joanie!—Ever your lovingest . . .

### XXXIV

BRANTWOOD, CONISTON, LANCASHIRE, 28th Dec. '81.

. . . You will not all believe the joy it is to *me* to have a letter<sup>1</sup> from you, and to see that you also are as you used to be, my own sweet Doctor that had perpetual sympathy with all good effort, and all kindly animated creatures. And I trust we shall both go on yet, in spite of sorrow, speaking to each other through the sweetbriar and the vine, for many an hour of twilight as well as morning. . . .

<sup>1</sup> See Dr. Brown's Letter, No. CCCXV.





## Letters from W. M. Thackeray to Dr. Brown

THE paper on the "Death of Thackeray," in the 3rd Series of *Horæ Subsecivæ*, shows the feelings of profound admiration and affection which Dr. Brown cherished for him both as a writer and as a friend. In the Note appended to that paper he relates the circumstances which led to their acquaintance. It was the year 1848, just before the blossoming of Thackeray's maturer fame. His works in such periodicals as *Fraser's Magazine* and *Punch* had revealed to the discerning that a new writer had arisen of extraordinary originality and insight, who would probably yet take his place in the front rank of literature. During the preceding two years (1846-48) *Vanity Fair* had been appearing in numbers, and was shortly to be published in volume form. But up to this time, though keenly appreciated by a certain class of readers, and especially in literary circles, Thackeray had experienced his full share of struggle and disappointment, and had not attained to any widespread popularity. Dr. Brown was one of his early admirers, and his desire that some tribute should be paid him by the citizens of Edinburgh was the occasion of their first correspondence, and laid the foundation of a friendship which lasted till Thackeray's death in December 1863. The story, however, is best told in Dr. Brown's own words<sup>2</sup> :—

"There happened to be placed in the window of an Edinburgh jeweller a silver statuette of *Mr. Punch*, with his dress

<sup>1</sup> A sketch by W. M. Thackeray, from a letter to Mrs. Brown.

<sup>2</sup> See *Horæ Subsecivæ*, 3rd Series, p. 194.

## Letters from W. M. Thackeray [1848

*en rigueur*, his comfortable and tidy paunch, with all its buttons; his hunch; his knee-breeches, with their tie; his compact little legs, one foot a little forward; and the intrepid and honest, kindly little fellow firmly set on his pins, with his customary look of up to and good for anything. In his hand was his weapon, a pen; his skull was an inkhorn, and his cap its lid. A passer-by—who had long been grateful to our author, as to a dear unknown and enriching friend, for his writings in *Fraser* and in *Punch*, and had longed for some way of reaching him, and telling him how his work was relished and valued—bethought himself of sending this inkstand to Mr. Thackeray. He went in, and asked its price. ‘Ten guineas, sir.’ He said to himself, ‘There are many who feel as I do; why shouldn’t we send him up to him? I’ll get eighty several half-crowns, and that will do it’ (he had ascertained that there would be discount for ready money). With the help of a friend, who says he awoke to Thackeray, and divined his great future, when he came, one evening, in *Fraser* for May 1844, on the word *kinopium*, the half-crowns were soon forthcoming, and it is pleasant to remember that in the ‘octogint’ are the names of Lord Jeffrey and Sir William Hamilton, who gave their half-crowns with the heartiest good-will. A short note was written telling the story. The little man in silver was duly packed, and sent with the following inscription round the base:—

GULIELMO MAKEPEACE THACKERAY

ARMA VIRUMQUE

GRATI NECNON GRATÆ EDINENSES

LXXX.

D. D. D.”

The first of the following letters is Thackeray’s reply.

### I

13 YOUNG STREET, KENSINGTON SQ., May 11, 1848.

MY DEAR SIR—The arms and the man arrived in safety yesterday, and I am glad to know the names of two of the eighty Edinburgh friends who have taken such a kind method of showing their good-will towards me. If you are grati I am gratior. Such tokens of regard and sympathy are very precious to a writer like myself who have some difficulty

still in making people understand what you have been good enough to find out in Edinburgh, that under the mask satirical there walks about a sentimental gentleman who means not unkindly to any mortal person. I can see exactly the same expression under the vizard of my little friend in silver, and hope some day to shake the whole octogint by the hand gratos and gratas, and thank them for their friendliness and regard. I think I had best say no more on the subject, lest I should be tempted into some enthusiastic writing of which I am afraid. I assure you these tokens of what I can't help acknowledging as popularity, make me humble as well as grateful, and make me feel an almost awful sense of the responsibility which falls upon a man in such a station. Is it deserved or undeserved?—Who is this that sets up to preach to mankind, and to laugh at many things which men reverence? I hope I may be able to tell the truth always, and to see it aright, according to the eyes which God Almighty gives me. And if, in the exercise of my calling, I get friends, and find encouragement and sympathy, I need not tell you how very much I feel and am thankful for this kind of support. Indeed I can't reply lightly upon this subject or feel otherwise than very grave when people praise me as you do. Wishing you and my Edinburgh friends all health and happiness, believe me, my dear Sir, most faithfully yours,

W. M. THACKERAY.

## II

13 YOUNG STREET, KENSINGTON, *September 21 [1851].*

MY DEAR SIR—You have heard of my projected invasion of your town, where I propose to mount my tub and send round my hat in November or December next, if the good folk of Edinburgh will hear me. I told J. Blackwood how kind you had been on a former occasion, and he said that as an adviser and backer, guide, philosopher, and friend in the coming venture I could have no better person than yourself if you would kindly act for me. Will you be so good as to think and say what I had best do, what public room I can take, what prices I should charge, whether Glasgow could be also favoured with a visit, etc. The lectures were very much liked in London, indeed I believe I had the best audience that ever was assembled to hear a man; Duchesses and great ladies came in spite of the dog days and a very inconvenient room, and the heads of my own profession, with bishops, bigwigs, and Parliament men. Macaulay came to 5 lectures

## Letters from W. M. Thackeray [1851

of the 6, and I hope that the report in the papers didn't give a good idea of them and couldn't.

I send my respectful compliments to Mrs. Brown, and beg to hint that my best backers in London were *the ladies*. There were some very pretty faces in the reserved seats. Couldn't we have reserved seats in Edinburgh at a pound, say, for the course of 6 lectures, and 3/ for the unreserved places? The great point is *not to fail*; better not to try at all than that. Across the *ingens æquor* a failure anywhere here might injure me; and I hope out of this harmless little scheme to turn a pretty penny for my children here and in America. I recommend myself to the Edinenses. *O Grati Gratæque!* I also will be *gratus* if you give me a friendly support once more.—Believe me, always faithfully yours,

W. M. THACKERAY.

### III

KENSINGTON, October 9, 1851.

MY DEAR DR. BROWN—I find your notes on my return home from the country, and thank you for them and your kindnesses all.

I don't know yet whether it will be December or January when I shall behold Rutland Street and my friends there. I want to go to Cambridge in November if the scheme is feasible, but can't move in it until the vacation is over and my friends in Cambridge are returned thither.

The gates of Liverpool and Manchester are also open to me, and I shall take these places either before or after Edinburgh as seems best to my advisers. Until the men are back at Cambridge in about a week, I can't therefore say when the Titmarsh Van will begin its career. But as I don't intend to touch the proceeds of the lectures myself (beyond actual travelling charges) and resolutely invest all the winnings for my two girls, I'm bolder than I should be otherwise in the business, and determined to carry it through with brazen resolution.

In order to this end you see I must work as if nothing had happened, and am under stringent engagements to write a novel, which will come out as I sail for America. Now to do this I must have my own way, my own lodgings, factotum, liberty, cigar after breakfast, etc., without all of which I can't work, and the forenoon being spent in study, the afternoon in healthful exercise, *then* comes the evening when we will

trouble Dr. Brown to go down to the cellar for that, etc. etc. You have brought me into very good company in print. I daresay there are good fish still in the sea.

With my best thanks and regards to Mrs. Brown, believe me, yours most faithfully, W. M. THACKERAY.

Wood shall be the man, and thank you.

#### IV. TO MRS. BROWN

ERLESTOKE, WESTBURY, *Jan. 5* [1852].

MY DEAR MRS. BROWN—The children write me from afar off that you have written them a kind letter: and though I think it is 20 years ago since I left Edinburgh, I have not forgotten you and write a stupid line to say how do you and the Doctor and Jock and Helen. Since I came away I have been out avisting, and write this on this grand thick official paper from a grand house, where I am treated very hospitably (as usual) and propose to pass 2 or 3 days more. Then back to London, etc., and thence to Brighton very possibly, to try and work a little. All this pleasuring has unfitted me for it, and I begin to fancy I am a gentleman of £5000 a year. They spoiled the youngest of my girls at Lord Ashburton's. I should have done better to bring them to Scotland, and show them simple kind people,—not that these are not too, but—but it's different: and I doubt whether yours isn't the best. I have no earthly news to send you—only the most stupid good wishes, but I wish instead of waiting up in my room here for dinner and 3 courses and silver and champagne, I was looking forward to 23,<sup>1</sup> and that dear old Small beer. And then we would have a cab and go to the Music Hall to hear Mrs. Kemble. I sometimes fancy that having been at Edinburgh is a dream, only there are the daguerreotypes and a box of that horrid shortbread still, and the hatfull of money to be sure. It wasn't at all cold coming to London, and the town of Berwick-on-Tweed looked beautiful: and I think my fellow-passenger must have wondered to see how cleverly I slept. He was a young Cambridge man, and knew your humble servant perfectly well. It was in the railroad I got the great news of Palmerston's going out. It didn't frighten you in Rutland Street much, I daresay, but in the houses where I go we still talk about it, and I amongst the number, as gravely as if I

<sup>1</sup> 23 Rutland Street, Dr. Brown's house.

## Letters from W. M. Thackeray [1852

was a Minister myself. Why do we? What does it matter to me who's Minister? Depend on it, 23 Rutland Street is the best, and good dear kind friends, and quiet talk and honest beer.

You see by the absurd foregoing paragraphs that I've nothing in the world to say, but I want to shake you and the Doctor by the hand and say Thank you and God bless you.

W. M. THACKERAY.

### V

[GLASGOW, Feb. 1852.]

MY DEAR DOCTOR—I arrived last night and thank you for your remembrance of me. I write off before the commencement of the Campaign, having a strong belief that it will turn out by no means a brilliant expedition. Never mind. A little humble pie is excellent food for a man, and your Edinburgh puffs swelled me out beyond all proportion. What a hideous smoking Babel it is, after the clear London atmosphere quite unbearable. Jeames too is evidently in a state of mental depression, and I look forward with some terror to a stay of 15 days here. But I won't move unless I find the place intolerable, and tolerable I confess it is not. I am well into Vol. III.,<sup>1</sup> and did my 6 sides of paper before sallying out like a man. *N'importe*, if we fail we'll fail cheerfully. Stirling of Keir gave me a letter to a large Merchant, I believe, at the Western Club; I went and the large merchant, who was indeed just going out to see a sick relative, told me to call again at one o'clock to-morrow. He thinks I'm a sort of actor, and he's quite right too. I shall go, I think, and be very respectful and humble. It'll be good fun. What a fine state Madam would be in! to see the great and illustrious Titmarsh cap in hand to a fat cotton or rum spinner. MOI! well, I think it's good fun, and am laughing, I think, quite sincerely at the joke. We all think too strong beer of ourselves, or our friends for us. *Que diable!* Cotton and rum are as good for a man as Novels; shirts and punch first, and then the luxuries of literature.

What do you mean by having such hot weather? I had a great thick coat and a wrapper yesterday to leave London, and now it's broiling hot in George Square.

I send you and Madam my duty and I daresay shall walk

<sup>1</sup> *Esmond*.

1852]

to Dr. Brown

into 23 Rutland Street ere long, where they *do* know who a gentleman is and how to flatter him. I made your brother-in-law's acquaintance at Colnaghi's the other day and should have liked to ask him home, but I rushed away t'other day from 100 engagements to Brighton to be alone, and only was at home a night before I set out on this journey to Glasgow.

But to see things is better than to read books. I've seen a number of queer sights the day. Perhaps the point I don't like about Glasgow is the number of Irishmen and women; their faces repel me and make me uncomfortable, and I remember having the same sensation in Dublin and not being able to account for it philosophically as at the present writing.—Good-bye, and believe me, yours always,

W. M. T.

## VI. TO MRS. BROWN

GLASGOW [*Feb.* 1852].

MY DEAR MRS. BROWN—It mustn't be next Saturday. I am going to dine with the fat merchant—a very kind and worthy old gentleman. He was anxious about a sick brother when I went to him, and never having heard of me from Adam, why should he do anything but beg me to call next day? However he came himself next day, yesterday, puffing up my stairs, when he had read Stirling's introductory letter, and even talked about going to my lecture; but I said, For God's sake don't, my dear Sir; a good bottle of claret and an arm-chair are worth all the lectures in the world,—and so, Madam, they are.

I can't write more than a line now, for my hand is quite tired with scribbling, and I have 1, 2, 3, ever so many business letters to do. So no more at this present from yours and the Doctor's,

W. M. T.

## VII

KENSINGTON, *May* 24, 1852.

MY DEAR DOCTOR—All in Kensington salute you kindly, and your little letter was very welcome, but you know we are agreed only to write shortly. Ain't we writing all day? Blackwood the W.S. I saw in the Park yesterday, and was pleased to hear that Aytoun is now a Sheriff and secure of

## Letters from W. M. Thackeray [1852]

comfortable ease for life. And are they going to make Alison a Bart.? I think if they give honour to English writers they should pick out gentlemen who write English; but the will of the Fates be fulfilled. There's a vigour in Alison's dulness that must succeed with the world.

I have just come away from seeing poor Jack Forster laid up with rheumatism, and Elliotson<sup>1</sup> grinned at me coming out of the Court yard (in Lincoln's Inn Fields) in his carriage. But, poor fellow, we shall fight when he is up again from his sick-bed. There's no mingling our two sorts comfortably together.

The book<sup>2</sup> seems as if it never would end though I am daily at work on it. I'm pretty well satisfied myself, but I know who, though she'll praise it and won't hear a word against it, won't secretly like it, nor do I care whether I do or don't. What the deuce! Our twopenny reputations get us at least two pence halfpenny, and then comes *nox fabulæque manes*, and the immortals perish. . . .

My days pass with Vol. 3 and my nights pretty much as usual in the world, though that has begun to have enough of me and *vice versa*. Well, this is a short letter, but I have written 9 to-day besides my day's work, and am tired of the sight of ink and paper. But not of kind friends, and I send my best regards to them—to you and your wife and to Helen of the bonnet and Jock of the kilt.

### VIII

85 RENSHAW STREET, LIVERPOOL [6th October 1852].

MY DEAR BROWN—Your constant kindness deserves not mere good-will on my part, for that you have, but better marks of friendship than my laziness is inclined to show. My time is drawing near for the *ingens aquor*; I have taken places for self and Crowe Jr. by the *Canada*, which departs on the 30th of this month, a Saturday, and all you who pray for travellers by land and water (if you do pray in your Scotch church) are entreated to offer up supplications for me. I don't like going at all, have dismal presentiments sometimes, but the right thing is to go; and the pleasant one will be to come back again with a little money for those young ladies.

<sup>1</sup> Dr. John Elliotson, to whom *Pendennis* is dedicated.

<sup>2</sup> *Esmond*.



I hope to send you *Esmond* before I sail; if not it will follow me as a legacy. I doubt whether it will be popular although it has cost me so much trouble, but it has been written as you know with a weight of griefs and cares on my back, which diminish daily, however, and now are all but cured. That's to say the wound's healed but the weakness is not over quite; a little change of air and scene will end that, and who knows when I come back I may tell you I'm in love with somebody else, and have begun Act I. of another tragedy or farce, which is it? . . .

I wish this place were like Edinburgh; but I get only a small audience, say 300, in a hall capable of holding 3000 at least, and all the papers will cry out at the smallness of the attendance. At Manchester the audience isn't greater but looks greater for the room is small. And though pecuniarily the affair is a failure it is not so really. I air my reputation and the people who come seem to like what they hear hugely.

Have I written to you since I came from abroad? It was a dreary, lonely journey. My mother wanted the children so much that I gave them up, nor was it possible that we could travel together, and the girls have two powers over them. So I had a dismal holiday alone, in place of a pleasant one with them. . . .

Carlyle is away in Germany looking after *Frederick the Great*. I don't know what Literature is about. I heard Jas. Martineau (the Unitarian) on Sunday and was struck with his lofty devotional spirit, and afterwards an old schoolfellow on the Evangelical dodge. Ah what rubbish!

And so is this which I'm writing. I think it's partly owing to an uncomfortable pen, but with bad pen or good I am always yours and your wife's sincerely, W. M. T.

Let me have another line here if you have time; the last was but a lazy scrap.

## IX

CHARLESTON, S.C. [UNITED STATES], March 25, 1853.

MY DEAR BROWN—I thought this very day how I would write a letter to Rutland Street, Edinburgh, and shake hands with some friends there; and behold with this morning your kind letter comes and remembrances pleasant and sorrowful of you all. I hope indeed and indeed your wife is better. I have been inventing plans for coming to Scotland in the

## Letters from W. M. Thackeray [1853]

summer, but who knows how Fate will lead a man so many weeks hence. The same post brings me news that my dear old stepfather has had a brain attack from which he is recovered, but at seventy-two my mother will not like to be away from him nor the children to be away from her, and when I go home it must be to them. So Dr. Last drives in his chariot now! so lui fais mon compliment. I wish it was driving to the railway to meet me. What is this about my being in love, Miss Mackenzie has told you? That was but a very mild attack of the disease; or an infinitesimal dose of *similia similibus*. I defy the fever pretty much now, and rather wish I could catch it.

I have no time to write letters scarcely, much more a book. I eat as usual 7 dinners a week, at other folks' charges, the lectures do pretty well, and I have laid by, but at 8 per cent (that is the common interest here), £200 a year; 6 weeks more will give me £50 a year more, and next year—I come home of course *interea*—will help me to £150 more. This will make me easy against the day when work will be over, and then, and then who knows what Fate will bring. The idleness of the life is dreary and demoralising though: and the bore and humiliation of delivering these stale old lectures<sup>1</sup> is growing intolerable. Why, what a superior heroism is Albert Smith's, who has ascended Mont Blanc 400 times!

It's all exaggeration about this country—barbarism, eccentricities, nigger cruelties, and all. They are not so highly educated as individuals, but a circle of people knows more than an equal number of English (of Scotch I don't say; there, in Edinburgh, you *are* educated). The negroes are happy whatever is said of them, at least all we see, and the country Planters beg and implore any Englishman to go to their estates and see for themselves. I think these 4 sides of paper might contain all I have got to say regarding the country, which I can't see for the dinners, etc. To-morrow I go to Richmond on my way to New York and thence into Canada; and in July or before, I hope to see that old country again which is after all the only country for us to live in,—not that there are not hundreds of pleasant people and kind, affectionate, dear people, but O for Kensington and home! Good-bye, and how do you do, my dear Mrs. Brown, and remember, Sir and Madam, that I am always yours affectionately,

W. M. THACKERAY.

<sup>1</sup> *English Humourists.*

## X

December 31, 1854, BRIGHTON.

MY DEAR DR. AND MRS. JOHN—I must send you a word of thanks, Sir and Madam, for your kind note and beautiful cake, and plenty of good wishes and hopes that the next year may bring you more health and happiness than this one I fear has brought any of us. I have been constantly unwell myself, and when not busy with my work (which has been wofully delayed by ill-health) so glum and hypochondriacal that I have left off writing to my friends, or even trying to see them very often, for what is the use of spoiling other people's good humour or bothering them about my own ill ones? I can call to mind one or two letters begun to Dr. John, and put in the fire on account of the blue devils that would get on the page. This one will go between the bars too, if I don't stop the inveterate habit of grumbling.

My girls are away at Paris, so that the cake won't be eaten before 3 weeks. We have a pretty little cheerful new house at Brompton. *Newcomes* goes pretty well in spite of the war. I think that is all my news. I am about 100 years older than when I saw you last; and through the mist of ages look back with affection and gratitude to that jolly time at Edinburgh, when, don't you remember? I used to grumble too. At Spa I saw that cheery, good-natured Mrs. Crowe whom I met at your house, and my first question to her was, how is Dr. Scott? meaning you. Then she told me you were dead, and I was in a dreadful panic; but you are alive and well, please God, prosperous, riding about in that fine carriage, taking fees all day for Jock and his sister's future behoof.

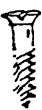
Blackwood sent me his magazine with an article which pleased me very much, and which I think uncommonly friendly and timely. I don't believe Bulwer is the first of that triumvirate the reviewer talks of: I think Dickens is (not that I have read him of late; but thinking back of him, I think he's the greatest *genius* of the three). But, Sir and Madam, what after all does it matter who is first or third in such a twopenny race? Kindness matters and love and goodwill, and doing your duty if you can, and leaving a little store for young Jocks and Helens, and Annies and Minnies. May all such be jolly and love their papas and mammas; and we oldsters have as happy a New Year as God shall send us!—Farewell, and believe me always sincerely and affectionately yours,

W. M. THACKERAY.

# Letters from W. M. Thackeray [1856]

October 19. . O. □

My dear Brown

We are coming at 3 to Edinburgh and I am not  
certain where we shall put up. Captain Hantkey of Middleton  
an old friend of mine wants to take us for the whole time  
if we like, but we are like the needles and are something to  
Society. Middleton is very good for me but I want the last  
bottle of that medicine at 23. I went to Barry's. They  
are too extortionate - oh couldn't we have decent lodgings  
in your quarter? Lord Elgin has invited us. John Black  
Wood likewise - yes, the lodgings of ~~his~~ would be the best  
plan, and that w<sup>d</sup> give me the excuse to bring a servant  
with me w<sup>d</sup> I want to do. Did you ever think I should  
become such a ? I send my very best regards to all  
of you. It will be folly to shake you  
by the hand saying "your ever-  
w<sup>d</sup> friend"

T.O.

1856]

to Dr. Brown

XI

October 19, O. □<sup>1</sup> [1856].

MY DEAR BROWN<sup>2</sup>—We are coming all 3 to Edinburgh and I am not certain where we shall put up. Captain Hankey of Middleton, an old friend of mine, will take us for the whole time if we like, but we are like the Merdles and owe something to Society. Middleton is very good fun, but I want the last bottle of that Madeira at 23. I won't go to Barry's, they are too extortionate; couldn't we have decent lodgings in your quarter? Lord Elgin has invited us; John Blackwood likewise. Yes, the lodgings would be the best plan, and that would give me the excuse to bring a servant with me, which I want to do. Did you *ever* think I should become such a screw? I send my very best regards to all of you. It will be jolly to shake you by the hand says yours ever,  
W. M. T.

About two hours after this was written came the kindest invitation in from J. Blackwood, and I have written to him mentioning the state of affairs, and leaving the matter still open. Hence the delay in answering your worship.

XII

Novr. 27 [1856].

MY DEAR MRS. BROWN AND DOCTOR AND JOCK AND HELEN— I have been writing letters without one moment's cessation from breakfast till now it's time to go. I was writing the whole of yesterday after my return till dinner. I couldn't come to see you. In fact, I don't want to come and see you, and hate taking leave. Good-bye my dear, kind friends, and believe me always gratefully yours,  
W. M. T.

On October 10, 1857, Mr. Thackeray sent Dr. Brown a tracing of the design of the paper cover of the monthly numbers of *The Virginians*. "Are you all well?" he wrote. "Sir, this is the best part of *The Virginians* which is done as yet. I have been working hard and don't like what I have done."

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<sup>1</sup> Onslow Square.

<sup>2</sup> See facsimile reproduction of this letter on opposite page.

XIII

[December 1857.]

MY DEAR DOCTOR—Xmas day must not pass away without a shake of the hand between Rutland Street and Onslow Square. What a many letters the Square owes you, how kind you are to it, sending *Culverwells*, *Scotsmen*, *Medical Reforms*, notices laudatory of *Virginians*, and good wishes always. Accept these in turn, Doctor and Madam, from one of the biggest, busiest, laziest of your friends. We are all on a Xmas visit to Mr. Russell Sturgis, a Merchant Prince. We are feasting in splendour; we have brought down new dresses; our Papa is going to London to-morrow though, to preside at the Bagmen's dinner. He hopes his speech will come better off than at Edinburgh. He wants to be at No. IV.<sup>1</sup> very much, but the calls on his time are so constant that he can scarcely get to work unless he flies from house and home. And how go away when the girls are invited to hospitalities? They are so happy and pleased that I must be so too; and ma foi *The Virginians* must wait for a day or two.

A Scotchman here tells me that nobody at Edinburgh spends more than a thousand a year. Hadn't I better come and live there? Hadn't I better come and see you all? Well, I long to do so.

28.—The letter stopped here on Xmas day and ever since I have had so much fish a-frying that I have not been able to finish the good wishes. We had a stupid dinner enough of the bagmen, and yesterday I came back to the Merchant Prince's, and to-day we are going through a sweet, calm, many-elled, gable-ended country, to pay a visit to a neighbour or two. I think I have no news positively. It was breakfast time not long since, and hark there goes the gong to lunch!

Jan. 2.—Is this absurd letter never to go away? Now it is written from the Garrick Club. I am just back from the Merchant Prince's (I ran away on the 29th and only went back yesterday). Our holiday is over, and I am grappling with No. IV. You will see at any rate, though I don't write, I think of you and Rutland Street. I hope you had no shares in the Western Bank.<sup>2</sup> My acquaintance Captain Reddie tells me that the desolation in Edinburgh is awful, and that 7 old ladies were carried off to Asylums two days ago. . . .

<sup>1</sup> *The Virginians*.

<sup>2</sup> The Western Bank suspended payment in 1857.

I read no new books, only Newspapers and Magazines of 1756, get out my numbers with extraordinary throes and difficulty—am as one distraught while the process is going on, and if I don't do that, am for days without ability to do anything else. I think I am no richer this day than I was on the 1 January last. Yes, Doctor, the Oxford election cost £850. It was a cowardly robbery of a poor, innocent, rightly-served man. And if I had won—that is the beauty of it—I should have been turned out, my agents, in spite of express promises to me, having done acts which would have ousted me. May the present be a luckier year to me, and a happy one!

## XIV

KENSINGTON, *Wednesday, March 3* [1858].

MY DEAR BROWN—Behold a drawing<sup>1</sup> instead of a letter. I've been thinking of writing you a beautiful one ever so long, but, etc. etc. And instead of doing my duty this morning I began this here drawing, and remembered I owed Madam one, and will pay your debt some other day—no, *part* of your debt. I intend to owe the rest and like to owe it, and think that I'm sincerely grateful to you always, my dear good friends.

W. M. T.

The Novel gets on pooty well—well, I think the last week *very* well.

A *marquis* and a *lord* had twice of the pudding last week, Mrs. Brown.

P.S.—Am afraid I shall try Parliament again if a dissolution. Glad you liked the Nymphs and the misogyny. *κάρδος* is a thistle: looked it out in Lexicon. Tremendously busy. Don't report well of my health, often knocked over. . . . Best regards to Madam.

## XV

HÔTEL DES 2 MONDES, RUE D'ANTIN,  
PARIS, *November 4* [1858].

MY DEAR DR. JOHN—Your kind note has followed me hither. I have many a time thought of you and of writing to you, but it's the old story, work, dinner, and *da capo*. I have nothing specially cheerful to say about myself and don't like *The Virginians* half as much as you do. Very good writing,

<sup>1</sup> See drawing on next page.



DR. JOHNSON AND DR. GOLDSMITH.  
Goldsmith in the new Plum-coloured Coat. Mr. Filby looking anxiously after it.  
From a Sketch by W. M. Thackeray.



but it ought to have been at its present stage of the story at No. X. I dawdled fatally between V. and X.; . . . I am old, or I am tired, or some other reason. All remains yet doubtful about my poor mother. She has had more than six weeks bed, but we don't know yet whether the fracture is to join or what is quite the nature of it. Poor dear, it was in returning from coming to see me that some boys ran against her near her own door and occasioned the mishap. She bears it wonderfully; her health has rather improved, and neither she nor her husband quite know how serious the accident is. I send no condolences about the departure of your good old Father. He was ready I suppose, and had his passport made out for his Journey. Next comes our little turn to pack up and depart. To stay is well enough, but shall we be very sorry to go? What more is there in life that we haven't tried? What that we have tried is so very much worth repetition or endurance? I have just come from a beefsteak and potatoes 1 f., a bottle of Claret 5 f., both excellent of their kind, but we can part from them without a very severe pang, and *nota* that we shall get no greater pleasures than these from this time to the end of our days. What is a greater pleasure? Gratified ambition? accumulation of money? What? Fruition of some sort of desire perhaps; when one is twenty, yes, but at 47 Venus may rise from the sea, and I for one should hardly put on my spectacles to have a look. Here I am snarling away on the old *poco curante* theme. How good-natured you are not to be tired of me.

The girls and I have been to Versailles to-day. We rather liked it. They went to my mother afterwards, I to solitude and beefsteak before mentioned. . . . Have never heard Dickens, but hope and believe he will make a great bit of money for the 8 children.

O how cold my back is! How cold the weather is! How stupid the letter is! How much better it would be to be sitting by the fire reading that stupid book than writing this stupid note! From the tone of this note don't you think I had better take a grain of blue pill to-night? Good-night, Doctor; good-night, Madam; good-night, children.

*Wednesday Morning.*—But is Miss Mackenzie going to marry Milor? Bath House will be restored to us in that case. Since her<sup>1</sup> death I have never been within the door. Have been sleeping in the most innocent manner for 10 hours; have got such beautiful apartments here, am living at

<sup>1</sup> Harriet Mary, Lady Ashburton, died May 4, 1857.

## Letters from W. M. Thackeray [1858

an awful expense, though. £1 a day for rooms is nothing here. It is the dearest capital in Europe. How respectable folks in your Athens would tremble at the extravagance here! Come, there is no more room in the paper.

*P.S.*—My mother goes on remarkably well, so well that I think I may soon go home.

### XVI. FROM MRS. RICHMOND RITCHIE<sup>1</sup>

36 ONSLOW SQUARE, *January 26* [1859].

DEAR DR. BROWN—You who have written so many kind letters to the above address about my father and about his books must let my father's daughter try and tell you all the pleasure your book has given there.

Coming back from Paris the other day and going my rounds over the house, I thought I saw a new face smiling freshly down from among all the old and seedy ones on Papa's book-shelf. And when I pulled it out I found it was Dr. John Brown I was saying how d'ye do to, whose handwriting we know so well.

I thought it would be very easy when I began my note to tell you how delightful I have found that handwriting in print, and how it seems to say all the things one has been looking about for, and to say them so charmingly and truthfully that it is the greatest pleasure to listen, only now I begin to feel rather foolish and inclined to stammer, and don't quite know how to go on. But though I stop now talking, it is not that I am going to leave off reading I assure you, and the still fresh cover is rapidly getting shabby, as it travels about after me up and down stairs.

We are all very cheerful and thankful to be at home and together again. Papa finished his No. last night about 2½ o'clock. To-day we have been out on our monthly lark, and he felt so fresh and eager for work that the lark was cut rather short so that he might rush into *March*, at least a couple of pages before dinner. Don't you think that looks as if he was much better than he has been for a very long, weary time? Except a one-day attack on Xmas day he has not been ill for nearly six weeks. One doesn't like to boast about it yet, one can only hope and long for things to have taken a better turn. You see I write just as if I knew you, but I haven't read your books and heard Papa talk about Edinburgh, without learning to count you as a friend.

<sup>1</sup> Now Lady Ritchie.

1859]

to Dr. Brown

Please say how d'ye do to Mrs. Brown and to Jock for us,  
and believe me, very truly yours,

ANNE THACKERAY.

## XVII

*April 3 and 4 [1859].*

MY DEAR J. B.—There is something artless in the accents of the enclosed youth which inclines my heart towards him. Will you and Madam send him a line and see him, and if he is not a humbug, lend him this bit of paper. If he is not a fit subject, burn the cheque, please. I hope you are both quite well and jolly. . . .

Heard Dean Milman ordering *Horæ Subsecivæ* at the Athenæum the other day. A publisher, who was it? in Edinburgh wrote me some weeks back asking me to review it in the *Quarterly*, but I couldn't make such a good review of it as some person long familiar with Edinburgh Society; and I can't write to ask a favour, but if ever I lay my eyes upon Elwin I will speak of the matter,—not of my doing it, but his getting some fit man.

I send my very best regards to Madam and the children, and am yours, my dear Brown, as always,

W. M. THACKERAY.

## XVIII

*Monday, 22 June [1859].*

MY DEAR DOCTOR—I am very sorry to hear the bad news about Madam, whom I don't like to fancy in illness and pain. Nature gives them a much greater share of it than to us who grumble and groan so much more; and the hypocrites bear it so well! I know one, two, three at this minute, all suffering, all cheerful, when the husband or company arrives, all ready to smile and hold conversation. Our little pains and aches are trifles compared to theirs, and I'm determined to bear my share fortitudinously. . . . Tom Taylor wrote the verses in *Punch*; <sup>1</sup> when I strike the lyre I think it's to a more original tune than that; it's not the best music, but it's my own. Jerrold never was Editor of *Punch*. I wrote to Douglas on that important matter on Saturday. I'm getting up a new sermon in his behalf, and have done little more this month past but racket and go to my Doctor, and to parties with my daughters, and ponder over the new book. The

<sup>1</sup> Probably the verses entitled "The Experience of a Downing Street Letter-Bag," in *Punch*, June 11, 1859.

## Letters from W. M. Thackeray [1859]

lines are out of the introduction<sup>1</sup> to *Faust*, about the prettiest of Goethe's, and utter sweetly and naturally a selfish, honest feeling of grief. I don't think I've any news. I know that I've ever and ever so many letters to write, and that I'm yours always and your wife's and your young ones', my dear Brown.

### XIX

36 O. SQ. R., July 1, 1861.

MY DEAR J. B.—Thanks for your constant kindness to W. M. T., who is indolent and disorderly but not ungrateful. . . .

What a fine memoir that is of your father! What a fine patriarchal figure! The book is all good reading. I wish you a good heart, fortunes and misfortunes, and am always, my dear Brown, yours,  
W. M. T.

### XX

PALACE GREEN, KENSINGTON, September 23 [1863].

MY DEAR J. B.—I am very glad you like my little Min. With her and her Sister I have led such a happy life, that I am afraid almost as I think of it, lest any accident should disturb it. She seems to be enjoying herself greatly; but when she has done with the Lows, I think she ought to come back to her Papa and sister. We three get on so comfortably together, that the house is not the house, when one is away. I know how kind you and your children would be to her. But Anny wants her companion, and a month will give her as much change of air as, please God, will be good for her. I have done no work for a whole year and must now set to at this stale old desk, or there will be no beef and mutton. I have spent too much money on this fine house, besides gimcracks, furniture, China, plate, the deuce knows what. . . . If I don't mistake there was a man who lived at Abbotsford overhoused himself. I am not in debt, thank my stars, but instead of writing to you why am I not writing the history of Denis Duval, Esq., Admiral of the White Squadron? Because I don't know anything about the sea and seamen, and get brought up by my ignorance every other page; above all, because I am lazy, so lazy that a couple of dozen would do me good. Good-bye, my dear J. B.—My love to the children from your grateful old friend,  
W. M. T.

<sup>1</sup> The *Zueignung* to *Faust*.

# Letters to Dr. Brown

## I. FROM LADY TREVELYAN

Octr. 7th [1846].

DEAR DR. BROWN—I am so sorry I have been prevented from writing to you, but the house has been constantly full, and I could not get a moment's time to myself, and now I fear it may be no use sending you these notes of Miss Swinburne's 5 Turners, but I only got the dates just now. . . .

It always seems to me that it is in his boundless prodigality of thought that Turner differs from other painters, and that the more Turneresque he was (up to his culminating point) the more full of meaning every bit of his work became. You never get to the end of a picture of his: the more you look at it the more you find out. It is not that there is a blue mist and you imagine things in it. You might fancy things in other people's blue mists, when you were in the humour, and the things would not be there next time you looked; but Turner's things are really there, and once you have seen them there they are for ever, and you know that he meant them, and meant a thousand things more that you have only to watch for and find out. People cannot imitate him in this any more than in his intense refinement of drawing when he chooses to draw; of course sometimes he was perfectly careless and reckless, and latterly sight and hand were failing. I believe the *Fallacies* were never even printed. Many of his innumerable sketch-books belonging to the nation are closely written over, wherever they are not covered with drawings, with verse and prose. His sketch-books in France are crammed with drawing and writing, 3 sketches on a page, and more on the other side of the paper. I think you know that there are 18,000 sketches and pictures

of those that he left to the Nation. I don't know whether Mr. Ruskin took the trouble to read all the poetry, etc.

I have seen Turner several times, and have been in that wonderful old house, where the old woman with her head wrapped up in dirty flannel used to open the door, and when she vanished at last, another old woman with the same dirty flannel about her head, replaced her, and where on faded walls hardly weather-tight, and among bits of old furniture thick with dust like a place that had been forsaken for years, were those brilliant pictures all glowing with sunshine and colour—glittering lagunes of Venice, foaming English seas and fairy sunsets—all shining out of the dirt and neglect, and standing in rows one behind another as if they were endless, the great "Carthage" at one end of the room and the glorious old "Téméraire" lighting up another corner, and Turner himself careless and kind and queer to look upon, with a certain pathos under his humour, that one could hardly miss. The man and the place were so strange and so touching no one could forget it of all who had ever seen and felt it.

The first time I saw him I remember it was not long after Wilkie's death, and I cannot forget the tone of feeling with which he alluded to it. I think I have told you all about him often before; I mean as to the two or three sayings of his that we remembered specially, and really it is useless writing all this down. Ruskin has said it before. As for Mr. Ruskin himself, it is hardly possible to say what he would do as an artist, if he gave himself scope, but he always has made his drawing a means, not an end, using it to illustrate his meaning, to show some particular fact about rock or vegetation, or to explain Turner's composition or some such thing, so that one can only judge of his exquisite delicacy and accuracy of drawing, and his intense and subtle feeling of colour. His great drawings of Venice are very noble things, grand in light and shade and bold in execution, but he keeps strictly to architectural fact. In those he is doing now of Swiss towns, there is much more room for other qualities, and I am sure you will be struck with their beauty and power as well as their care and accuracy. There is much of Turner's fulness in all he does, but far more sternness and insisting on defined outline; if one must say there is a failing (and it seems that you have set your heart on having one), perhaps it is a want of play. He has always used his drawing to teach something or to record something, and one would like to see more sense of enjoyment. There

is the truth and the exceeding beauty, but it is sternly and sorrowfully set down in earnest admiring work, full of power and grace and tenderness, but never in hearty enjoyment and abandonment to the frolic and fancy of the moment—at least so it seems to me, but most likely I'm wrong. Of course he is right, but I do not think that I imagine the absence of gladness, the resolute adherence to fact, the stern restraint he puts upon his fancy—does it strike you so? I don't think it is of any use my writing you a description of any of his drawings. If one describes a Turner or a Landseer, or anybody's picture whose style is well known, it does convey a definite idea to a person who has not seen it, but one cannot give a vivid idea of style by description. You ask when he began to draw, and I should think when he was a very small child. His mother has lots of drawings that he did when he was a little boy. I think in one of his books he mentions who were his chief teachers. He always talks of Samuel Prout with great respect, and I think he learned of him at one time. Now I'm afraid I've told you very little, and that the little is not of much use, and it is a very dirty scrawl, but I have not time nor heart to write it over again. If there is anything in it you wanted to know I shall be very glad. . . .—With our united kindest regards, yours very truly,

P. J. TREVELYAN.

## II. FROM COVENTRY DICK

*February 1848.*

MY DEAR JOHN—You are wondering at my not having written you, but will excuse it when you know that for nearly this last fortnight my nights have been almost quite sleepless. During the day, therefore, I am very lazy and low-spirited. My nerves are sadly shaken, as my handwriting will witness. But I cannot delay longer the duty of declaring my abounding admiration of the article on Chalmers. I did with it what I do with few things indeed,—read it aloud to my sister, whose exclamations of admiring *surprise* were incessant. Of course, I condemn it considered as an article; it is a disorderly collection of grand paragraphs, not an edifice of them. I condemn also a certain Carlylism of manner, not because this prevents me enjoying it, or lessens my admiration of the author, but because I see it will militate against his taking that place *permanently* in

literature which he could hold, if he would but be more classic and regular and restrained. What pleases me most is the vindication this and your other efforts have effected of the high opinion I was bold enough to form of you while yet you were unappreciated by most other men. I always believed you capable of such things, and believe you capable of greater, if you were still more self-relying, and *added* to your other qualities some more patience and scrupulousness in composing. . . .

### III. FROM LORD COCKBURN

2 MANOR PLACE, 16 *March* 1852.

MY DEAR SIR—I am much gratified by what you say, though my conscience will not allow me to acknowledge the justice of all your praise.<sup>1</sup> But I receive it with no less pleasure, as evidence of your partiality both towards myself and towards our mutual friend Lord Jeffrey. No reputation to myself was ever in my view. Bookmaking has never been within my Craft, and living 3 score years and 12 abates the vanity of Authorship, where that vanity has existed. My sole object was to unfold the acts, and the nature of Jeffrey, by speaking truth of him; and if I have given people *better grounds* for admiring and loving him than they had, my end is attained.

I agree with you entirely about the Letters. No letters can be better than Cowper's in English diction, or in amiable thought. But have not Jeffrey's more spirit and nerve, and more of purity and affection *under immersion in the world's business*? Besides much of the *life* of these letters is taken out, by the necessity of being silent about recent persons and occurrences.

Again thanking you for your kindness, believe me, yours faithfully,

H. COCKBURN.

### IV. FROM THE RIGHT HON. W. E. GLADSTONE

CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER,  
DOWNING STREET, S.W., *Novr.* 25, 1859.

SIR—I take the liberty of requesting that you will permit me, as Rector of the University of Edinburgh, to

<sup>1</sup> The reference is to Cockburn's *Life of Lord Jeffrey*, published in 1852.



nominate you as an Assessor and Member of the University Court. Not having upon you the claim of even the slightest personal acquaintance, I may with the more freedom assure you that I prefer this request upon public grounds alone, under the influence of an anxious wish that, in the exercise of every power with which I may be entrusted, I may be enabled to direct it steadily and solely towards the good of the University.

I have the honour to be, Sir, your faithful servant,  
W. E. GLADSTONE.

#### V. FROM DEAN STANLEY

CHRIST CHURCH, OXFORD, April 28, 1861.

MY DEAR SIR—I have to thank you for your very interesting supplement to your Father's Life. Indeed you place him before us. How striking that account of your Mother's death, and of its effect on him! I read with much pleasure your account of his German studies. I fear that this will be sufficient to rank him, in the eyes of many good men on this side the Tweed, in that goodly company of "Atheists" which begins with Socrates, and passing through the early Christians, ends with Arnold and Temple. Pray read Temple's Sermons. That their author should have been the butt of the theological agitators and of the whole Bench of Bishops is a very mournful fact, which, however, may bear good fruit hereafter.

*How very good too is the note on the "Senses of Prophecy."*<sup>1</sup>  
—Believe me to be, yours very faithfully,

ARTHUR P. STANLEY.

#### VI. FROM THE SAME

CHRIST CHURCH, OXFORD, May 2, '61.

MY DEAR SIR—I am much pleased to find that you approve of the article in the *Edinburgh Review*.<sup>2</sup> I make no secret of the authorship. To have had such a vehicle for expressing my indignation was a great advantage. But I feel that no one ought to make such a series of attacks—attacks such as I trust I shall never be called to make again—except openly or under a veil so transparent as to allow all who are concerned to see who has dealt the blow. I

<sup>1</sup> See "Letter to John Cairns, D.D.," p. 60, note 2.

<sup>2</sup> April 1861; art. on *Essays and Reviews*.

have not seen Isaac Taylor's article, and it is one happy result of having discharged my own artillery that I need no longer go spying about the enemy's camp to find their watch-posts. I trust that the tempest is abating. But we have one powerful spirit who so thoroughly enjoys riding on the crest of the wave, and letting loose the winds, that I can never be sure of calm. What would Samuel<sup>1</sup> of Oxford have been in the General Assembly, I sometimes ask myself; more or less than he is as a Bishop? Episcopacy at large has shown its violent side. There are some few expressions in the article against particular persons that I would recall in cold blood, but none that I have uttered against the Episcopal letter.

I turn with relief from all this to the history of the Judges of Israel, in which I am now immersed. In that most human of all Books of the Bible what a fire, what an inexhaustible fire, of the best kind of Inspiration! To bring out Lectures on the Jewish Church will be my next object, and I cannot but hope that they will be better "Aids to Faith"<sup>2</sup> than some of the works that profess to be so.

Have you read the dialogue between the spiritual and medical Doctor in *Elsie Venner*?<sup>3</sup> Pray do so. We thought of you in reading it.—Yours very faithfully,

A. P. STANLEY.

#### VII. FROM THE REV. BENJAMIN JOWETT

Octr. 13 [1861].

MY DEAR SIR—I found on my return here your kind present of the life and writings of your Father. I have not had time to look at the writings, but I have read the life with the greatest interest. The letter at the end is a most charming memorial. I don't think I know of any piece of religious biography which I liked nearly so well or which showed the same feeling and genius.

It must be a great pleasure and honour, more than that of long heraldic pedigrees, to look back on your descent from such as your Father and Grandfather.

Hoping that the trials and sadnesses of life may not fall too heavily on you, believe me, dear Sir, with many thanks, yours very sincerely,

B. JOWETT.

<sup>1</sup> Bishop Wilberforce.

<sup>2</sup> Edited by Bishop (afterwards Archbishop) Thomson; a collection of Essays in reply to *Essays and Reviews*.

<sup>3</sup> By Oliver Wendell Holmes.

VIII. FROM SIR HENRY TAYLOR<sup>1</sup>

THE ROOST [BOURNEMOUTH], May 31, 1862.

MY DEAR DR. BROWN—I have not yet thanked you for your sermons,<sup>2</sup> but I *am* thankful. I had known you before as the Landseer of Literature and in divers other capacities, and I am glad to know you now as a preacher to the poor, and, in them and through them, to us all. In reading your little book I could not help feeling, with some regret for the difference of dates, how my old friend Southey would have been delighted with it. No one loved good stories and the pleasantries of wisdom better than he, nor was there any one in whom the humanities and the spiritual sense went more hand in hand.

I entirely go along with you in your protest against the inordinate activities of the present times. I think it was Dr. Baillie, whose advice to take exercise being met by the patient's assurance that "he had not time for it," made answer, "Have you time to die, sir?" But the truth is that such men have not time to live as they ought, leisure being, as much as occupation, one of the moral necessities of life. To a copy which I have of the *Regimen Scholæ Salernitanæ* there is appended an old translation with this couplet:

Use three physicians: first use Dr. Quiet,  
Next Dr. Merriman, and Dr. Diet.

In the first matter a man must be his own doctor. In the second he may be a good deal helped, and I think he is often a good deal hindered; for I have observed that it is the way of many doctors to entertain an anxious patient and his friends with the particulars of the most distressing and appalling case of a similar kind with which their experience has furnished them, or perhaps with the particulars of the worst case of any kind which is now or has been lately in their hands. As to diet, I think a patient, if judicious and unbiassed, may find his own way more or less, taking the presumptive evidence of general experience as adduced by his doctor for a ground to start from. I had more to say, but five folio volumes of evidence of abuses in a hospital and

<sup>1</sup> Published in the *Correspondence of Henry Taylor*, edited by E. Dowden. See Dr. Brown's Letter, No. CXLIV.

<sup>2</sup> *Plain Words on Health Five Lay Sermons to Working People.*

## Letters to Dr. Brown

[1862

lunatic asylum in Jamaica wait beside me,<sup>1</sup> and I must go to my work.—Believe me, yours very sincerely,

H. TAYLOR.

### IX. FROM DEAN STANLEY

CHRIST CHURCH, OXFORD, *Sept. 5, '62.*

MY DEAR DR. BROWN—You have been so kind always, and so quick in understanding what has been my intention in what I have written, that I ventured to send to you without scruple what many would think too short or slight to be worth reading.<sup>2</sup> I am very glad to find that I was not mistaken. That one on Joseph was preached on Sunday morning, in entire unconsciousness of the tidings I was to find at Cairo on that very evening.<sup>3</sup> You may suppose with what a force every word that I had spoken returned upon me in that dreadful hour. I do not think that I could ever have preached it again. The next Sermon (at Jaffa) was my first attempt to gather up what remained after the greatest void that could have been made for me on earth. You will indeed feel for me, as I believe that I can feel for you. May we have strength still to do that which God has appointed for us.—Yours sincerely,

A. P. STANLEY.

### X. FROM LADY AUGUSTA BRUCE<sup>4</sup>

OSBORNE, *Novr. 10, 1862.*

DEAR DR. BROWN—I was tempted to thank you from Reinhardtsbrunn for the two Pamphlets you so kindly sent me, and to allow myself the pleasure of saying a few words in answer to your letter, but I had too many arrears of duty to be able to grant myself such an indulgence. Now you have given me a double excuse, of which I most gladly avail myself, and this time not only have I to thank you in my own name, but to acknowledge in the name of the Queen the reprint of your article on A. Hallam, which H.M. has accepted, and was very anxious to possess in its present form. I must also tell you that the first pages of your article on Dr. Chalmers struck the Queen very much. Those thoughts on the departure of a great and good man seemed to H.M. singularly applicable to the departure of the beloved Prince.

<sup>1</sup> Sir Henry Taylor held an appointment in the Colonial Office.

<sup>2</sup> *Sermons preached in the East, 1862.*

<sup>3</sup> The death of his mother.

<sup>4</sup> Afterwards Lady Augusta Stanley.

## XII. FROM LORD HOUGHTON

FRYSTON HALL, FERRYBRIDGE, YORKSHIRE, Nov. 14 [1863].

MY DEAR SIR—I have been so attracted by the article in the *North British* on Pet Marjorie that I write to ask if by any means you can procure me a copy of the Verses of that wonderful child. It is an odd coincidence that that article should have come out in Edinburgh just when I was instancing in my address to the Philosophic Society the instinctive Poetry of very young children as the most divine and oracular part of the whole matter. If you are to be there I would give you some curious instances of this Phenomenon in a little girl of mine own, between six and seven.

I was much annoyed at not seeing you at the Lord Provost's, and we sat up quite late in the hope that you might come in. The only fault I found with my visit to Edinburgh was that I was tantalised with the hope of the society of friends I desired to know, but which I did not succeed in doing. I trust you will in some degree repair this disappointment by coming to see me either in London or in Yorkshire.—I am, yours truly, HOUGHTON.

## XIII. FROM DEAN STANLEY

CHRIST CHURCH, OXFORD, 26 Dec. [1863].

MY DEAR SIR—We still think that as regards a review or statement of Lord Elgin's<sup>1</sup> public services Mr. Stirling of Keir would be the best. But failing him, or even any way in regard to the more early and private history, Lady Augusta thinks that your thought about Dr. Johnston<sup>2</sup> is extremely happy; and the last details no doubt would be supplied by her or myself. There is only this difficulty, that it is not likely now for us to receive any further details till Lady Elgin's return, which I presume would bring the article too near upon February. The letters which came on Decr. 23 convey all that will be *written* from India,—very touching, and conveying an impression of extraordinary calmness, fore-

<sup>1</sup> Governor-General of India. He died at Dharmasala in the Punjab, 20th November 1863.

<sup>2</sup> Rev. W. Johnston, D.D., Limekilns, Fife; an intimate friend of Lord and Lady Elgin.

thought, and consideration as well for public as private interests, but not, I think, giving enough to fill up such a sketch as might be given with a more complete knowledge of all the particulars. I mention this as a guide to your final determination. If all be well, she will reach England by the end of January. . . .

I wish that you could have been present in the Abbey on the 23d.<sup>1</sup> There was an awful solemnity in the venerable, almost sepulchral aspect of the place and hour which suited well with an event which, full of happiness as I must trust it is and will be, has been, we may say, begun and completed under the very wings of Azrael, the Angel of Death. One of my friends reminds me as a good omen that on that evening the days began to lengthen. So may it be, that each day of our lives henceforth may move longer and brighter, emerging farther and farther out of the gloom of the past—lengthening with an ever-increasing length for the work which lies before us.—Yours sincerely,

A. P. STANLEY.

#### XIV. FROM THE DUCHESS OF ARGYLL<sup>2</sup>

ROSENEATH, *December 27th* [1863].

MY DEAR DR. BROWN—It surprises and pleases me (in a sad way) that Mr. Thackeray should have spoken kindly of me. I did not deserve it in any way. I admired him much, but did not know him well, and there was something that made me shy of him. What intense satisfaction and pleasure he gave me the other day by his "Roundabout Paper" on Lord Clyde, and the vile Club gossip about the writing-paper.<sup>3</sup> I was longing to tell him so, and the Duke met him, and did. And he did one great good by the warm-hearted article on Macaulay just after his death. The creation I care most about is Col. Newcome, so like our Dr. Cumming,<sup>4</sup> though the Dr. has the advantage of a Scotch business head. It must all be most touching to you; his affection for your poor Wife must have deepened the feeling for him very much, and I do grieve for any added burden upon your heart

<sup>1</sup> The day of Dean Stanley's marriage.

<sup>2</sup> Mother of the present (9th) Duke.

<sup>3</sup> "Strange to Say, on Club Paper," published in *Cornhill*, Nov. 1863; see Thackeray's *Roundabout Papers*.

<sup>4</sup> Dr. Cumming was the physician and friend of the 8th Duke of Argyll.

now. I feel that your trial is so very great that one feels sure of very peculiar and *near* help being given to you, to bear it; though the solemn mystery of her state must make everything dark sometimes, and there is nothing for it but the certainty that God is as surely in the "darkness and the cloud" as in light. How much Arnold in his (to me) perfect sermons used to dwell on the wonderful depths of mercy for us in the cry from the Cross, "My God, my God, why hast Thou," etc.—that He should have known even *this*, and that it should have been told to us! Dear Dr. Brown, you cannot have strength for wear-and-tear sort of reading. I think you talked as if you were reading Renan's book. I do not see why, *unless* called upon, one should do anything so painful. The chapter on Lazarus must be enough to make one's blood creep. God bless you this new year and

## XV. FROM LADY AUGUSTA STANLEY

PALACE, *Jany. 15th*, 1864.

MY VERY DEAR FRIEND—I would not say at the first moment on receiving the sad announcement what we both felt. I knew that you would understand it and have the assurance that we were in a peculiar and special manner, and with our whole hearts, entering into your unutterable grief and counting your every pang. I can never tell you how earnestly I have desired that it should have pleased God to spare your beloved one to you yet a while, knowing full well the blessedness of each hour even in the midst of sorrow and anxiety, as long as her acute sufferings were not so acute and so beyond your power of alleviating as to compel you for her sake to desire almost that they should cease; but now, since it has been God's Will to take her to Himself, I can only pray that you may have seen once more on those loved features, so long altered by illness, the look of earlier years, and the dawn of that joy and brightness which will have enabled you to realise the present blessedness, and the blessedness of the day of restitution when all that was precious in the past shall be restored to you, blended with that happiness of which we can hardly now conceive the completeness and extent, and for which notwithstanding the instinct of our hearts does not cease to crave.

That God may strengthen and bless you in and for and

with your beloved children is my earnest prayer. We both hope that you will allow us to see you during our short stay in Edinburgh. I am sure that you will do so if possible. I feel as if more than ever I could sympathise with you and your dear Daughter; my heart bleeds for you both.

With our united affectionate regards and sympathy, I am, my dear Friend, yours most truly,

AUGUSTA STANLEY.

## XVI. FROM SHIRLEY BROOKS

6 KENT TERRACE, REGENT'S PARK, 29 Feb'y. 1864.

MY DEAR SIR—Let me return you my best thanks for your very kind note received this morning. It contains two passages of great interest to me. I am exceedingly glad that you were pleased with the memorial, imperfect and hastily written as it necessarily was (I had but four hours to think over and write it, owing to a mistaken impression of the day for which it was wanted), and as I learn from my dear old friend Robert Carruthers that you have written on the same great subject, you can judge better than most men how hard it is to say a quarter of what one would say over "so dear a head" as Thackeray's. He was the friend I most valued, save about two, in the world.

What you say about the Dean is very gratifying indeed, though of course I keep that gratification for my own private bosom. I should have had some private communication with Dr. Stanley, but I have thought it more respectful to him not to seek to "affect him with the slightest notice" (as the lawyers say) of the movement until I should have the pleasure of laying before him such a memorial, from such an array of good men, as would afford the Dean himself the pleasure of seeing how our friend was honoured.<sup>1</sup> Excuse this very hasty note, which I prefer sending as it is to losing a post, and believe me, my dear Sir, yours most faithfully,

SHIRLEY BROOKS.

*P.S.*—Needless to say that a certain wee pet is the pet of my (Scottish) wife and British weans.

<sup>1</sup> Shirley Brooks suggested the subscription that provided the bust of Thackeray by Marochetti in Westminster Abbey.



## XVII. FROM THE RIGHT HON. W. E. GLADSTONE

11 CARLTON HOUSE TERRACE, S.W., *March 22, 1865.*

DEAR DR. JOHN BROWN—Many thanks for your very interesting paper about Leech. What drawings! My three favourites are: 1. The little lady with the firm heel. 2. The boothooks. 3. That almost if not quite sublime drawing of Merryman and his dead wife. Do you happen to know if the Queen has ever seen your *Marjorie Fleming*? I *think* she has not. I am confident she would read it with delight, if you were to cause it to reach her hands.

N.B.—Breakfast at 10 every Thursday morning after Easter week. If you make a trip to London, pray write and remember us.

## XVIII. FROM MISS MARTINEAU

AMBLESIDE, *Sept. 13, 1865.*

DEAR DR. BROWN—Your welcome present arrived yesterday, and I cannot tell you how thankful I am to you for it, and yet more for your kind note. If I had been fit to be told that you were here, and to try to see you, it would have been a great pleasure to me, and also to my niece who lives with me, to see you. We all know *Rab and his Friends*, and some of us know a good deal more in that direction. I hunger after these new little books, and slow as I now am in reading and everything, I daresay it will not be long before I am familiar with every word of them.

I am not so suffering now as when you were here. But how long it takes some people to wear out! There are promises of it now, however. I have left off work (except journalism, which is easy, interesting, and eminently useful). I used to say people had better (generally speaking) drop their main work after sixty. At sixty I *could* not, there was so much wanted. At sixty-three, I have no choice, and I'm sure I have no objection. . . .

With kind and grateful regards, I am yours,

HARRIET MARTINEAU.

## XIX. FROM R. H. HUTTON

THE "SPECTATOR" OFFICE, 1 WELLINGTON STREET,  
STRAND, LONDON, W.C., 20th Jan. 1866.

MY DEAR SIR—You may depend on me for posting on the nineteenth Feb. an article on *Ecce Homo*. *I suppose I am to send it to you as I know no other address.* The book and all these books are much on my mind. I have been looking into Strauss's *New Life of Jesus*, which seems to me in tone and intensity of negative bitterness much worse than the old one of his. Has anything been said of it in the *North British*? Yes, I know and profoundly respected Mr. Scott.<sup>1</sup> There was a kind of frost on his great faculties here, which, as you say, will be thawed away, I trust, in the world he has now entered. I have not yet got the *Scotsman* you mention, and look for it with eagerness. Our three dogs often hear their mistress read aloud your books to them, and wish no less than their master and mistress to know your living voice. We live at Teddington, about 10 miles out of London, and cherish a hope of seeing you there some day. Romp, our great retriever, we call statuesque, Trot, our little Scotch terrier, picturesque, and Colin, half terrier and I fear half poodle, grotesque. You would perhaps give them an immortality.

I suppose there is no doubt that that article is by M. Arnold. It gives me more pain than I can say to believe so. But I don't think any one else could have written it. I am glad I may refer to it. But I have a profound feeling of inability to express the intensity of my feeling about these things. I feel dumb when my heart is hot within me, and can only sometimes call upon Christ to vindicate His own reality instead of getting wretched little litterateurs like me to speak for Him. "Oh that thou wouldest rend the heavens and come down, that the mountains might flow down at Thy presence," is the inexpressibly strong feeling with which I always begin my painful work on subjects that one word from God Himself would render so inexpressibly insignificant and meaningless. But so I suppose it is always to be in this world.—Believe me, my dear Dr. Brown, yours ever most truly,

R. H. HUTTON.

<sup>1</sup> Alexander John Scott (1805-66), first Principal of Owens College.

XX. FROM THE SAME

THE "SPECTATOR" OFFICE, 1 WELLINGTON STREET,  
STRAND, LONDON, W.C., 24th Feb. 1866.

MY DEAR DR. BROWN—Thank you from my heart for this most kind note. You are far too kind to what I write. The truth is we agree very profoundly on these deeper subjects, and your sympathy makes you see what I write as better and deeper than it is. I was striving to say much that I felt I had not said. It is a great comfort to me to find that my own experience is supported by yours. I suppose nobody knows who the author of *Ecce Homo* is except Macmillan. He tells me that Stanley and many others have written to him to express their pleasure in the *second* part of *Ecce Homo*, and their complete indifference to the first part. I confess that so far as I had any preference as for the first part. He seemed to me to get a little into the abstract and systematic-constructive line in the latter part, which seldom interests me deeply. Christ is so infinitely greater than Christianity that I fear "Developing" Him, as the mathematicians say, into Christianity, as he there tries to do. You are quite right as to "enthusiasm." If he used it in that sense, I was wrong.

With heartfelt thanks for your most kind sympathy, believe me, my dear Dr. Brown, affectly. yours,

R. H. HUTTON.

XXI. FROM THE SAME

THE "SPECTATOR" OFFICE, 1 WELLINGTON STREET,  
STRAND, LONDON, W.C., 18th Jan. 1868.

MY DEAR DR. BROWN—You do not know what a pleasure your little notes are. My *sine quâ non* and I laughed so heartily over your account of your two puppies. No picture of Rosa Bonheur's (and her dogs are far above Landseer's) could have painted them with half the vividness. . . .

I have such a nice kind little note from Miss Cross about my review of her poems. She is greatly pleased, and I do not think I said a *word* more than the exact truth about her. Indeed I did not know anything of her before. Did you read our account of our Swiss journey this year, written after we came back, with the nonsense about our dogs? I like to think of your reading anything which is a little

nearer to our home life, as it seems to draw us rather closer together than the mere life of thought. I wish we could see your two puppies at home; let us know what you call Toots's little companion or brother. The notice of Ferrier was not mine, but by a young Scotchman. I think it was good. Did you ever see my brother-in-law, William Caldwell Roscoe's poems and essays which I published soon after his death in 1860? He was a true poet though he did so little. *Violenzia* is a play of singular power and beauty, though not fit for the stage. I should much like you to see them. I wrote a short memoir for the book, and if you have never seen the volumes, should so much like to give you them.

Believe me, my dear Dr. Brown, with my wife's and my own affectionate regards, most faithfully yours,

R. H. HUTTON.

## XXII. FROM THE SAME

1 WELLINGTON STREET, 8th March 1868.

MY DEAR DR. BROWN—Why do you write to me so sadly? I too have been in sad trouble, having lost a very dear sister this year very unexpectedly. I just got to her six hours before her death, and they will be hours I can never forget till my own. The world has seemed very weary to me, and God very distant, for months past, and I not unfrequently feel in the tone of mind expressed in your note. Life fags without strengthening me. I send you the book I in some respects value most almost in the world next to the Gospels. My brother-in-law was the dearest friend I ever had. We are a little in doubt where to go and think of the Harz. Scotland is so dear for those who like a good deal of moving about, or I might think of the Hebrides. Do they talk Gaelic only there? I cannot bear to be unable to talk with the people. Do you know if living is cheap and clean, and locomotion easy there? I must get *beyond* the English crowd of visitors somehow. I hope you may at odd moments read and enjoy my brother-in-law's poems and essays, but don't mind about writing to me of them. I only wished to send you the best token I could send that we love you, little as we have had the great enjoyment of knowing you.—Ever affectionately yours,

R. H. HUTTON.

XXIII. FROM DEAN STANLEY

*June 2, 1872, DEANERY, WESTMINSTER.*

MY DEAR DR. JOHN BROWN—We are still more or less under the shadow of our late bereavement.<sup>1</sup> It will be long before the grass grows on that grave.

Thanks for the Poems of Professor Veitch. What an excellent subject is that of the meeting of Hwimleian and Merlin. I think that more ought to have been made of it, though much has been made.

The question of the intervention of the State always appears to me to hang on the question of the merits or demerits of the actual State. If our Government was as corrupt and unscrupulous as that of the U.S.A. seems to be, I think I should become a U.P. of the extremest dye. But down to this time I still regard the English State on the whole as the best organ of English, British, Christian society. *Ergo*, etc.—Ever yours truly, A. P. STANLEY.

XXIV. FROM THE REV. BENJAMIN JOWETT

*GRANTOWN, INVERNESS-SHIRE, July 12 [1873].*

MY DEAR DR. BROWN—You are very good to think about us. Here we are in this land of Grants and Gordons, well pleased with ourselves and with the place, though I think that we get rather more than our share of rain. Thank you for the programme, which was of great use to us; we began yesterday (the Sabbath) by driving over to Aviemore and took a walk round by Lochanealan and Rothiemurchus. We ought to have ascended Craigellachie, but I was tired and the weather was bad. Coming home we stopped at Abernethy, heard the story of the Red Sea from an unbelieving Gillie, and found the fir tree (Peter Porter's) on the south of the Manse. The sky had cleared and nothing could exceed the beauty of the Sunset reflected on Cairngorm and Bynac. The house here is very comfortable, and we have an excellent landlord and landlady.

Many thanks to you for the two books. I shall not complain that you have given Swinburne a larger and better book than you gave me, for I am interested in reading Dr.

<sup>1</sup> Lady Augusta Stanley's sister, Lady Charlotte Locker, died in the spring of 1872.

Duncan's *Colloquia*,<sup>1</sup> though I do not agree with him. He is a limited sort of liberal in theology, not at all willing to go where the truth carries him. I wonder what will be the Christian religion a hundred years hence, if only we go on at the same rate as we have done during the last thirty years in England and Scotland. And there seems no sign of the main stream being different, though religious feeling and Church organisation, and caution and expediency make a great deal of backwater. How small is the wish of Churches to make men better compared with their desires to get them into their power. I think that if there was a person like your great-grandfather John Brown of Haddington who united the same force of will with a great intelligence, he might do much for the present age.

I hope that you and your son will make out a journey to Oxford next spring. I will invite any one whom I know, and whom you would like to meet. Do come. Believe me, my dear Dr. Brown, ever yours truly,

B. JOWETT.

## XXV. FROM SAMUEL L. CLEMENS (MARK TWAIN)

ELMIRA, NEW YORK, April 27, 1874.

DEAR DOCTOR—This town is in the interior of the State of New York, and was my wife's birthplace. Miss Clara Spaulding looked in a moment yesterday morning, as bright and good as ever. She would like to lay her love at your feet if she knew I was writing, as would also fifty friends of ours whom you have never seen, and whose homage is as fervent as if the cold and clouds and darkness of a mighty sea did not lie between their hearts and you. Poor old Rab had not many "friends" at first, but if all his friends of to-day could gather to his grave from the four corners of the earth what a procession there would be! And Rab's friends are your friends.

I am going to work when we get on the hill. Till then I've got to lie fallow, albeit against my will. We join in love to you and yours.—Your friend ever,

SAML. L. CLEMENS.

<sup>1</sup> *Colloquia Peripatetica*, edited by W. Knight.

XXVI. FROM SIR HENRY TAYLOR<sup>1</sup>THE ROOST, *July 31, 1874.*

DEAR DR. BROWN—Your letter gave me much pleasure; if you knew how much, I am sure you would be glad to have written it. And it gave me encouragement also, which is much wanted for a work of this kind. You ask whether you are to see no more of it. If you and I were the only persons concerned, it would give me nothing but pleasure that you should see the whole of it, except that I am afraid the rest of it would not please you so much as what you have seen. But there are some pages now in the hands of the printer which might interest you equally, because they also relate to Wordsworth, and when they come to me in proof I will send them, and I will see then if there are any other sheets which I can send with them. You ask about Miss Fenwick's letters to Mrs. Henry Coleridge. I do not know what has become of them. They would not be doctrinal like her correspondent's, and may very likely contain nothing but what the circumstances of the moment gave birth to. Her letters to me generally contained nothing more, but occasionally a great deal more. I intend to make a selection from my correspondence if I should have time (not from my own letters only, but really from my correspondence), and select letters of Miss Fenwick would be amongst them. In the meantime, as you take an interest in her, I send you some stanzas relating to her which I wrote in or about the year 1828. Mrs. H. Coleridge was all that you say. But what a misfortune it is that those two portraits (so-called) of her have been preserved, and presented to those who have not known and seen her beauty, and cannot conceive or understand the defamation of it which those painters have been guilty of! Even her uncle Southey was not more libelled of painters. Lord Byron said of him that "to have his head and shoulders he would almost have written his Sapphics." But what is given in most of the portraits is no more like the head and shoulders than it is like a cod's head and shoulders—not so much. Many thanks for the pleasant extract from Ruskin's letter. No, I do not know him. I have met him once, but not so as to know him. And more than many for your cousin's *Bibliomania*. From the little I

<sup>1</sup> Published in the *Correspondence of Henry Taylor*, edited by E. Dowden. See Dr. Brown's Letter, No. CCLIII.

1874]

## Letters to Dr. Brown

have yet read of it I know I shall like it much. I am very glad that my daughters are to meet you at Minto. They will be delighted to make your acquaintance, and through them I shall feel as if I had some personal acquaintance with you.—Believe me, ever yours sincerely,

HENRY TAYLOR.

### XXVII. FROM THE SAME

THE ROOST, BOURNEMOUTH, 30th Sept. 1874.

DEAR DR. BROWN—It was very kind of you to send me that extract from Mrs. Fletcher's Autobiography. I had not seen it nor heard of it. I remember Mrs. Fletcher and her daughter, but not that particular meeting. When I met her she had retired from her position as Queen of the Whigs at Edinburgh, a great pre-eminence in her day, and, as well as I recollect, was living a very quiet life in the neighbourhood of Rydal Mount. I have no copy of Cowper here (for my books live at East Sheen), and it is so long since I have read him that I hardly know what I should think of his poetry now. I am not sure that when I admired his poetry most, I did not admire his Letters more, but like almost every collection of Letters they should be weeded. A real service would be done to literature by any judicious man who would undertake the task of reconstructing the "Life and Correspondence" of some half-dozen of our eminent men, and omitting what is redundant. I am very glad you have had a holiday and are the better for it, but I wish it had been at Minto when my daughters were there.—Ever yours sincerely,

HENRY TAYLOR.

### XXVIII. FROM SAMUEL L. CLEMENS

June 22, 1876, ELMIRA, NEW YORK, U.S.

DEAR FRIEND THE DOCTOR—It was a perfect delight to see the well-known handwriting again! But we so grieve to know that you are feeling miserable. It must not last; it *cannot* last. The regal summer is come, and it will smile you into high good cheer; it will charm away your pains, it will banish your distresses. I wish you were here, to spend the summer with us. We are perched on a hill-top that overlooks a little world of green valleys, shining rivers, sumptuous forests, and billowy uplands veiled in the haze of



## Letters to Dr. Brown

[1876

distance. We have no neighbours. It is the quietest of all quiet places, and we are hermits that eschew caves and live in the sun. Doctor, if you'd only come!

I will carry your letter to Mrs. C. now, and there will be a glad woman, I tell you! And she shall find one of those photos to put in this for Mrs. Barclay; and if there isn't one here, we'll send right away to Hartford and get one. Come over, Doctor John, and bring the Barclays, the Nicolsons, and the Browns, one and all!—Affectionately yours,

SAML. L. CLEMENS.

### XXIX. FROM MRS. S. L. CLEMENS

[Same date.]

DEAR DOCTOR BROWN—Indeed I was a happy woman to see the familiar handwriting. I do hope that we shall not have to go so long again without a word from you. I wish you could come over to us for a season; it seems as if it would do you good, you and yours would be so very welcome.

We are now where we were two years ago when Clara (our baby) was born, on the farm on the top of a high hill where my sister spends her summers. The children are grown fat and hearty, feeding chickens and ducks twice a day, and are keenly alive to all the farm interests. Mr. J. T. Fields was with us with his wife a short time ago, and you may be sure we talked most affectionately of you. We do so earnestly desire that you may continue to improve in health; do let us know of your welfare as often as possible. Love to your sister. Kind regards to your son, please.—As ever, affectionately your friend,

LIVY L. CLEMENS.

### XXX. FROM DEAN STANLEY

[1876.]

DEAR DR. JOHN BROWN—Yes, your card expressed all that you wished. It is indeed like what Hallam calls “the gathering of the Heavens.” One after another of these bright lights in that bright circle extinguished, yet let us trust rekindled.

What a gloom this loss<sup>1</sup> has been you can guess, from knowing, as I think you did, the gaiety, the devotedness of her that is gone.

Lady Frances Baillie comes to-night. That is the best news I can give you.—Yours sincerely,

A. P. STANLEY.

<sup>1</sup> The death of his wife.

## XXXI. FROM THE SAME

MEGGINCH CASTLE, ERROL, N.B., *Aug. 8th, 1876.*

MY DEAR DR. JOHN BROWN—Do not think for a moment that I did not know how deeply you felt for me and with me. There were, I doubt not, many who sate silent, like the friends of Job, and many who, like you, were at first prevented from giving utterance to their grief. But all whether by silence or speech who ever had seen “that sweet content, that bright gift of God” (as she is called by a foreign Princess who writes to me, having seen her only for 2 days), must have entered into the desolation which has fallen on my life.

I am thankful, and she would have been thankful, to be assured that you are yourself restored again. I was in Edinburgh but a single night on my way to St. Andrews last week or I would have endeavoured to see you. Perhaps the opportunity will recur. It will give me the greatest pleasure to talk to you, if you will allow me to do so, of those brilliant and beautiful times now gone by for ever—for ever in this world; to be transfigured, let us hope, somehow and somewhere, hereafter and elsewhere. I am going on Monday to Broomhall to see the monument to her that I have caused to be erected at Dunfermline. I felt that there, where there would be no outward sign of her, was the place for the most visible memorial of her. At Westminster we have her grave; at Dunfermline, they must be reminded of that loveable and lovely countenance, so far as art and affection allied could reproduce it.—Yours sincerely,

A. P. STANLEY.

## XXXII. FROM PROFESSOR LUSHINGTON

PARK HOUSE [MAIDSTONE], *Jan. 26, 1877.*

MY DEAR FRIEND—You know A. H. Hallam’s *Remains*, but I do not think they contain a little poem which your letter called up to my mind; it was addressed to a man whom I knew not at the time when it was written, but who afterwards was one of my dearest friends. He too died early, in 1842, and lived through the sadness of his youth to be trustful and comforted, and I believe happy in the devotion to duty which brought his death. To him A. H. H. wrote “in answer to a desponding letter”:

Oh this is ill done, cheer thee, leave to snails  
Of the world's fashion thus to creep, and house  
In self-created gloom; thou art a man,  
Whom Shelley might have pick'd out for a friend,  
Or Plato loved to fill with "words of light"  
All a long summer's walk in Academe.

If I who have cause to be grateful to you more than to most men venture to quote these lines to you, I think you will bear with me and abstain from exclaiming with Prospero, "What! my foot become my tutor!"

I am very glad you like Charles's<sup>1</sup> *Globe* Sonnet so much. He will be greatly pleased to hear of your praise. Read *Harold* without further delay, and let me know what you think of it.

Thanks for the Edinburgh news. I am always glad to hear of the town whose walks and ways are more familiar to my mind than most places in our island, as some of its people are to my heart.—Ever yours affectionately,

E. L. L.

### XXXIII. FROM DEAN STANLEY

DEANERY, WESTMINSTER, Oct. 16, '77.

MY DEAR DR. JOHN BROWN—Alas! for Inveraray—not for that square tower, but for the Duchess, the alarm, the discomfort, the inevitable loss of things precious. . . .<sup>2</sup>

I picked up some health and spirits on the journey, but I find myself but a poor waif and stray on my return. "The trumpet's silver voice is still" which animated every duty and shared every pleasure. Yet, as you say, I have it nevertheless. . . .—Ever yours truly, A. P. STANLEY.

### XXXIV. FROM THE RIGHT HON. W. E. GLADSTONE

HAWARDEN, Dec. 11, 1877.

MY DEAR DR. JOHN BROWN—Your card did not pass unnoticed by me, and indeed I can truly say you have been often in my thoughts, but my power of giving them words in cases where I would wish it most is sadly curtailed by the necessity laid upon me of much involuntary speech and writing.

When I quitted the Edinburgh Rectorship I did not

<sup>1</sup> Charles Tennyson Turner, brother of Lord Tennyson, and brother-in-law of Professor Lushington. The title of the Sonnet is "Letty's *Globe*."

<sup>2</sup> Inveraray Castle was partially destroyed by fire in 1877.

expect to put on the harness elsewhere, and when I was solicited to stand at Glasgow I stipulated for a *total* exemption from duty. However, it now devolves upon me to name an Assessor, and I should like to do it with your advice, were it only in memory of our old connection. . . .

I daresay you will kindly consider whether or not you can give me any aid in this rather *confidential* matter.

I do not know whether or when I shall get to Edinburgh again. Years gather, and owing to the Eastern question, exciting and perturbing work has increased rather than declined, but I can grudge nothing in so glorious a cause and must go through with it to the (at least proximate) end, which I trust in God is now not distant.—Believe me, sincerely yours,

W. E. GLADSTONE.

If you have formed any decided opinion as to the position of the question of Disestablishment in Scotland I shall be glad to be favoured with it.

#### XXXV. FROM MRS. S. L. CLEMENS

[1879.]

DEAR DOCTOR BROWN—We had grown so very anxious about you that it was a great pleasure to see the dear, familiar handwriting again, but the contents of the letter did make us *inexpressibly sad*. We have talked so much since about your coming to see us. Would not the change do you good? Could you not trust yourself with us? We would do everything to make you comfortable and happy that we could, and you have so many admirers in America that would be so happy and proud to welcome you. Is it not possible for you to come? Could not your son bring you? Perhaps the entire change would give you a new and healthier lease of life.

Our children are both well and happy; I wish that you could see them. Susie is very motherly to the little one. Mr. Clemens is hard at work on a new book now. He has a new book of sketches recently out, which he is going to send you in a few days; most of the sketches are old, but some few are new.

Oh, Doctor Brown, how can you speak of your life as a wasted one? What you have written has alone done an *immense* amount of good, and I know, for I speak from experience, that one must get good every time they meet and

chat with you. I receive good every time I even *think* of you. Can a life that produces such an effect on others be a wasted life? I feel that while you live the world is sweeter and better. . . .

I must leave a place for Mr. C. Do think about coming to us. Give my love to your sister and your son.—  
Affectionately, LIVY L. CLEMENS.

Dear Doctor, if you and your son Jock only *would* run over here! What a welcome we would give you! and besides, you would forget cares and the troubles that come of them. To forget pain is to be painless; to forget care is to be rid of it; to go abroad is to accomplish both. Do try the prescription!—Always with love,

SAML. L. CLEMENS.

*P.S.*—Livy, you haven't *signed* your letter. Don't forget *that*. S. L. C.

*P.P.S.*—I hope you will excuse Mr. Clemens' *P.S.* to me; it is characteristic for him to put it right on the letter.

*Livy* L. C.

### XXXVI. FROM OLIVER WENDELL HOLMES

BOSTON, *March 18th*, 1882.

MY DEAR DR. BROWN—I cannot tell you how much pleasure it has given me to hear from you and to receive the volume<sup>1</sup> which you have so kindly sent me. In such spare moments as I have found in the midst of an unusual pressure of work of one kind and another, I have taken up the volume, and read, always with delight and refreshment, no matter where I opened. Most of all I have read and re-read and then insisted on reading for the third time aloud to my wife, that infinitely tearful, smile-full, soul-full, tender, caressing—where shall I stop?—story of Pet Marjorie, the name and story not all new to me, yet never old in its surpassing sweetness. Dear little soul! And the picture of great hearty Sir Walter wrapping her in his plaid and striding off with her, if only that fragment of your writings were saved from the wreck of English literature, men and women would cry over it as they cry to-day over the Lament of Danaë, and your name would be remembered with that of Simonides.

<sup>1</sup> 3rd series of *Horæ Subsecivæ*.

Yes, cry and smile and laugh too. It is told, the story, without any affectation, but so lovingly that the blessed little creature becomes our own child, our "ownty-downty," as New England nursery small talk has it.

It is long since I have heard from you except incidentally. In the meantime our good friend Fields has gone where I hope he has met some of the authors whom he knew and liked and served. A good friend of a great many writers he certainly was, a very agreeable companion, a most hospitable entertainer, a pleasant writer of reminiscences, and a degree of cleverness which commended him to men of genius like Dickens, Thackeray, Hawthorne, and others of the upper order in the literary hierarchy.

A few of us here are standing out from the crowd in virtue of our age. Longfellow, seventy-five years old the other day, had a great ovation which he enjoyed, though not well enough to show himself in public during these last months. Whittier, now visiting in Boston, a year or two older than I am, complains in a note I just received of the "demon of neuralgia." If I may venture to name myself in such company, I can say that at seventy-two (I cannot believe it, though I know it) I am delivering my hundred yearly lectures on Anatomy, and now and then writing a poem, etc. What do you think? I had a child named after me in *Aberdeen*, Scotland, the other day, by an entire stranger!

God bless you, dear, good, sweetly human Dr. Brown.—  
Lovingly yours, OLIVER WENDELL HOLMES.

### XXXVII. FROM THE SAME

Boston, *June 2d*, 1882.

MY DEAR SIR<sup>1</sup>—I thank you for your kind letter, the sad burden<sup>2</sup> of which was, of course, not new to me. I grieve to think that so sweet a spirit could not have lingered longer with us. So little while since I saw the body of Longfellow committed to the earth, so few days since I stood by the open grave of Emerson! Our western sky seems darker as these illuminated souls sink from our view, and now the shadow which was over us comes over you in the loss of a kindred spirit. I have never seen your father except through his writings, and I may say also through the eyes of my son, who found great delight in making his acquaint-

<sup>1</sup> Dr. Brown's son.

<sup>2</sup> Dr. Brown died May 11.

ance, and was fondly anticipating meeting him in the course of a visit he is now making to England, and perhaps to Scotland. But though I never met your father face to face, all who read his books felt as I felt that they knew him. A most kind and tender nature he surely had, such thoroughly human feelings that they won the heart of the reader and made him as it were the pressure of a warm hand and look as if into the light of a kindly moistening eye. The simple pathos of his descriptions, relieved by that delicate sense of humour which belongs not rarely to sympathetic natures, made his stories so charming that it would be hard, I think, to match them, certainly in all our recent literature.

The letter you refer to as having been written by myself was sent after receiving his recent volume of Essays, "John Leech" and others. How I did delight in re-reading these, with which I was familiar! And now I am very glad that I told him of all the pleasure, more than pleasure, they had given me, and that this little word of mine proved not ungrateful to him. His last letter to me is dated the 30th of March. It is full of kindness—may I not say affection? The letters grow dim as I read his last message. He leaves a most fragrant memory in the world he has left, for a better, we may hope for him, if a heavenly nature gives entrance to the kingdom of Heaven.—Very truly yours,

OLIVER WENDELL HOLMES.

### XXXVIII. FROM SAMUEL L. CLEMENS

HARTFORD, *June 1, 1882.*

MY DEAR MR. BROWN<sup>1</sup>—I was three thousand miles from home, at breakfast in New Orleans, when the damp morning paper revealed the sorrowful news among the cable despatches. There was no place in America, however remote, or however rich or poor or high or humble, where words of mourning for your honoured father were not uttered that morning, for his works had made him known and loved all over the land. To Mrs. Clemens and me the loss is a personal one, and our grief the grief which one feels for one who was peculiarly near and dear. Mrs. Clemens has never ceased to express regret that we came away from England the last time without going to see him, and often we have since

<sup>1</sup> Dr. Brown's son.

projected a voyage across the Atlantic for the sole purpose of taking him by the hand and looking into his kind eyes once more before he should be called to his rest.

We both thank you greatly for the Edinburgh papers which you sent. My wife and I join in affectionate remembrances and greetings to yourself and your aunt, and in the sincere tender of our sympathies.—Faithfully yours,  
S. L. CLEMENS.

Our Susie is still "Megalopis." He gave her that name.

Can you spare us a photograph of your father? We have none but the one taken in group with ourselves.

### XXXIX. FROM THE SAME

HARTFORD, Feby. 11th, 1890.

DEAR MR. BROWN<sup>1</sup>—Both copies<sup>2</sup> came, and we are reading and re-reading the one, and lending the other to old-time adorers of *Rab and his Friends*. It is an exquisite book, the perfection of literary workmanship. It says in every line, "Don't look at me, look at *him*," and one tries to be good and obey; but the charm of the painter is so strong that one can't keep his entire attention on the developing portrait, but must steal side-glances of the artist, and try to divine the trick of her felicitous brush. In this book the Doctor lives and moves just as he was. He was the most extensive slaveholder of his time, and the kindest; and yet he died without setting one of his bondmen free. We all send our very, very kindest regards.—Sincerely yours,

S. L. CLEMENS.

<sup>1</sup> Dr. Brown's son.

Of *Dr. John Brown and his Sister Isabella*, by E. T. M'Laren.





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